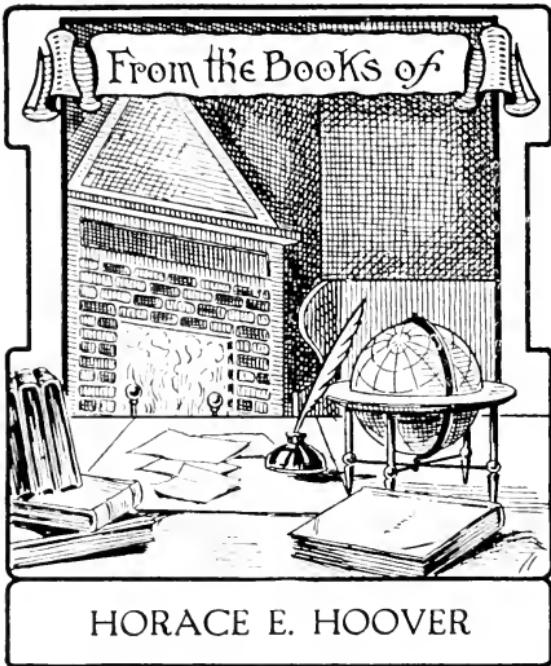




From the Books of



HORACE E. HOOVER

1936









THE

G O S P E L

ACCORDING TO

M A R K

EXPLAINED BY

JOSEPH ADDISON ALEXANDER

NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER 124 GRAND STREET

1858

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JOHN F. TROW,  
PRINTER, STEREOTYPER, AND ELECTROTYPER,  
Nos. 377 & 379 Broadway, New York.

## P R E F A C E .

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It has so long been the habit, both of readers and interpreters, to treat the Second Gospel as a mere abridgment, supplement, or compilation, without any independent character or value of its own, that some may be surprised to find it here expounded independently of Luke and Matthew, as a history complete in itself, designed to answer a specific purpose and to make a definite impression. This is not the result of caprice or accident, but of a strong conviction, dating from an early stage of exegetical study, that Augustin's notion as to Mark's dependence upon Matthew, although acquiesced in for a course of ages, is a hurtful error, and that this description applies still more strongly to some later speculations of the German critics. This conviction has been strengthened and confirmed by the whole course of late investigation and discussion on the subject of the Gospels, notwithstanding the tendency of some writers to the opposite extreme of making Mark the oldest of the Gospels, and the basis upon which the rest were afterwards constructed. Without attempting to determine its precise chronological relations, there is something in its structure, as described below, which makes it eminently fit to give the first impression of the Gospel History, and prepare the reader for the study of the other books. This, which has long been the

writer's practice in academical instruction, he is happy to see sanctioned in one of the latest and best English works upon the Gospels, of which he was not able to avail himself until his own was completed. "The notes on the Gospel of St. Mark will be found to be more full than is the case in works with a similar design. These annotations were written first, with the object of calling attention to an independent record which has been treated in some quarters with unmerited neglect, and with the view of relieving the first Gospel as much as possible from a redundancy of notes. We would suggest to those who may put this work into the hands of their pupils at school, that there are reasons why the Second Gospel should be read before any other, as the best introduction to the regular and systematic study of the New Testament." (Webster and Wilkinson's Greek Testament, with notes Grammatical and Exegetical. Vol. I. p. 9. London : 1855.)

Closely connected with these views is another feature of the plan adopted in the present volume, that of making it complete in itself, and leaving nothing to be eked out or supplied by reference, even to the writer's other publications. This will account for the occasional repetition of what he has said elsewhere, as a lesser evil than the irksome necessity of seeking it in places which, to many readers of the present work, may be unknown or inaccessible. The absence of all reference to other and especially contemporary writers, some of whom he highly values and has diligently studied, is partly owing to the want of room, but also to the fact that his design is not to supersede or rival other works upon the subject, but to supplement them by preserving the specific fruits of his own labours in the same great field.

PRINCETON, September 1, 1858.

## INTRODUCTION.

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THE BIBLICAL HISTORY consists of two great parts, contained in the Old and New Testaments respectively. The New Testament portion naturally falls into two divisions; the Gospel History or life of Christ, from his birth to his ascension; and the Apostolical History, from his ascension to the close of the canon.

The Gospel History, when measured simply by its chronological dimensions, or the space of time included in the narrative, is but a small part of the sacred history, yet fully entitled to the place assigned it, both by its absolute and relative importance.

The absolute value of the Gospel History is that arising from the dignity of its subject, as the Life of Christ, in which, to our conceptions, there is nothing little or uninteresting, since all his words and actions are intrinsically great and worthy of attention.

The relative value of the Gospel History is that which springs from its connection with the rest, and especially its striking intermediate position, as the winding up of all that goes before, and the foundation of all that follows, so that neither the Old Testament history nor that of the Apostolical Church would, without it, be of any use or intelligible import.

But the Gospel History is not more distinctly marked by its subject and its relative position than it is by its peculiar form, in which it is unlike all other parts of Scripture. For although

we elsewhere meet with two and sometimes even three parallel accounts of the same events, this is the only case of four such narratives, and these not merely parts or passages of books, but complete and independent histories.

But besides the mere plurality or quadruplicity of the accounts, these four books, when compared, present a singular phenomenon of striking difference and no less striking likeness. For although the subject is identical, and all exhibit the same Christ, far more harmoniously than Socrates is painted by his two disciples, Xenophon and Plato, there is a surprising freedom and diversity, not only in the choice of topics, but in their arrangement and expression, and an independence in the statement of details amounting sometimes to apparent contradiction; while in other cases, or perhaps in the same context, there are coincidences of form, even in minute points, too exact and yet too arbitrary to be accidental.

It is this combined diversity and likeness which creates both the necessity and difficulty of constructing Gospel Harmonies, i. e. synoptical arrangements of the four inspired accounts intended mainly to demonstrate their consistency, but partly also to determine the precise chronological succession of events, in which attempt the harmonists have failed as signally as they have been successful in the more important object.

The true use of Harmonies, as aids in the elucidation and defence of the four Gospels, as consistent and authentic narratives, has sometimes led to their abuse, as something to be substituted for the books themselves in their original and independent form, and even to their absolute amalgamation into one new narrative, distinct from all the others, but intended to include and supersede them.

This attempt proceeds upon two groundless suppositions; first, that exact chronological arrangement is essential to the truth of history; and second, that the Gospels, as we have them, are merely crude collections of materials, out of which the history must be constructed by the exercise of human skill and industry; whereas they are themselves complete authoritative histories,

which may be usefully compared and harmonized, but which were designed to be separately read until the end of time.

If this be so, the quadruplicity or fourfold form of the Gospel History becomes a lawful and interesting subject of inquiry, as to its specific purpose, over and above the ultimate solution, of which all such questions are susceptible, by simple reference to the will of God. The question is not whether God so willed it, which is absolutely certain, but whether he willed it for a definite reason, either partially or wholly ascertainable by us, and if so not without effect upon our methods of interpretation.

The fact itself to be explained, to wit, the immemorial existence of the Gospel History in the form of four complete books, is attested by the uniform tradition of the Church, which has never recognized as parts of the inspired canon, either more or less than these four Gospels; nor ever attached any other names to them than those which they now bear; a testimony only rendered more impressive by the absence of such perfect unanimity in reference to the order of their composition, and their original relation to each other, which have therefore given rise to various hypotheses of more or less intrinsic probability, intended to account for the existence and the several peculiarities of our Four Gospels.

In opposition to the view, avowedly or tacitly maintained by some believing writers, and perhaps by most believing readers, that the fourfold form of the Gospel record is a matter of course, or something altogether arbitrary, neither requiring nor admitting explanation, some sceptical critics have attempted to account for it as accidental, by assuming the existence of one or many original gospels, out of which, by various combinations, versions, and abridgments, the canonical Four Gospels were evolved and took their present shape; a theory refuted by its complicated and gratuitous assumptions, and its total failure either to demonstrate the existence or to explain the disappearance of the documents, to which it traces the extant gospels.

A less extravagant and no doubt partially correct hypothesis is that of an oral gospel, constantly repeated, yet inevitably

varied, so as to account for both the likeness and the difference observable between the Gospels even in minute points of arrangement and expression. The fatal defect, both of this and of the previous suppositions, is that they ascribe the present form of this part of the sacred history to gradual and accidental causes; whereas all believers in its inspiration must regard that form as an essential feature of the Gospel as divinely planned from the beginning.

But even holding fast to this assumption as the only safe one, we may still inquire, what was the specific purpose meant to be accomplished by recording the Life of Christ in four books rather than in one? The simplest and the most familiar answer to this question is, that the later Gospels were intended to complete and supplement the others by supplying their omissions. But this only throws the difficulty further back, and leaves it wholly unexplained why there were omissions to be thus supplied, or in other words, why the whole was not revealed at once and embodied in a single narrative, such as some harmonists have since endeavoured to construct.

An ingenious effort has been made to solve this difficulty by exhibiting a gradual formation of the Gospels to meet actual emergencies and governed by contemporary causes; the first Gospel being written to supply the original demand near the close of the first generation, and before the oral tradition was entirely lost, and Matthew being chosen to compose it as the only apostle whose previous occupation had accustomed him to writing; the second being written to adapt the history to Gentile readers, and at the same time to preserve the vivid reminiscences of Peter; the third to give it more historical completeness, as a methodical and formal composition; and the fourth, to counteract corruptions which had sprung up in the interval between its date and that of the three others.

But whatever truth there may be in these suppositions, they are not entirely satisfactory so long as they ascribe the present fourfold form of the Gospel History, if not to accidental yet to providential causes, which are themselves left unexplained. The

only possible solution of the problem seems to be by adding to these plausible hypotheses the obvious assumption, that the four Gospels were intended to present the life and character of Christ in four harmonious but distinguishable aspects, each adapted to produce its own impression independent of the others, yet all reciprocally necessary to secure the aggregate effect intended to be wrought by this part of the sacred history.

The Gospels, thus viewed, have been likened to four portraits or four landscapes, all presenting the same objects, but in different lights and from different points of view, and illustrative of one another, yet wholly insusceptible of mere mechanical amalgamation without utterly destroying their distinctive character and even their intrinsic value. So the Gospels, although really harmonious and equally inspired, are designed to answer each its own specific purpose and produce its definite impression on the reader, a design which would be nullified by blending them together in one narrative, however chronological or skilfully constructed. This view is perfectly consistent with the plenary inspiration of the writers, which did not destroy their individuality, as may be seen from their peculiar use of words and phrases, often wholly unimportant, but for that very reason the more certainly unstudied and the evident result of personal habit, turn of mind, or special purpose, all controlled but not confounded or destroyed by inspiration, any more than the authority of Moses is impaired because he did not write in Greek, or that of Paul because he did not write in Hebrew. What is true of different languages must needs be true of different dialects and idioms, and even individual peculiarities in the use of one and the same language.

The individuality and independence thus evinced by minute peculiarities of language, may be also proved by diversities of plan and method, and apparent reference, in the first instance, to different classes of readers, more especially to Jews and Gentiles, as well as by habitual attention to particular topics or to circumstances of a certain kind, which one systematically introduces and the rest omit. Such are Luke's repeated mention of our

Lord's devotional habits, Mark's of his looks and gestures, Matthew's of the prophecies fulfilled in his history, and John's of the feasts which he attended and his double affirmation (Verily, verily.) Nor is the truth of this view in the least dependent on our own capacity to trace distinctly or completely the specific purpose of each Gospel as distinguished from the rest, or the precise impression meant to be produced upon the reader. It is enough to know or to believe, as we have already seen abundant reason to believe, that such a purpose and impression were included in the plan of these divine memorials, which are therefore to be tenderly and reverently handled, not as bundles of historical material to be wrought by us into a definite intelligible texture, but as ready-made authoritative histories, adapted to affect us in a certain manner, when perused as they were written, whether we can account for the effect or not.

But while the view, which has been now presented, of the Gospels in their mutual relations and their individual peculiarities, does not necessarily imply that these relations and peculiarities are clearly traceable by us in all their manifold details, it does imply that each and every Gospel has a character and method of its own, which may be readily detected and described by all attentive readers, and which cannot be entirely neglected without injurious effects on its interpretation, or at least without obscuring those peculiar traits by which it is distinguished from the rest, and by which alone its separate existence can in any measure be accounted for. It now remains to ascertain how far these conditions are complied with in the second Gospel.

On examining the book itself, the following particulars are found to distinguish it from all the others. It is the shortest of the four, although this difference is sometimes overrated in consequence of measuring it simply by the number of the chapters, which are very unequally divided, and some of which in this book are unusually long. But even when compared with more exactness, it is still below the others in extent of surface. This is no doubt partly owing to another circumstance, by which it is distinguished, and relating more to its internal structure. It

contains but little that is purely biographical, and is confined almost entirely to our Lord's official life or public ministry. A third peculiarity, less strongly marked, but also serving to explain its brevity, is the predominant attention given to the Saviour's actions, as distinguished from his words or his discourses, which are not only introduced more sparingly, but almost always incidentally, and as it were in illustration of the acts or incidents with which they were connected. In this respect the second Gospel differs even from the first and third, but still more from the fourth, in which an opposite method is pursued, the incidents and actions seeming to be mentioned only for the sake of the discourses which they serve to introduce and to illustrate.

As a fourth distinctive feature of this Gospel, although really included in the one just mentioned, is the curious and interesting fact, overlooked by undiscriminating readers, but sufficient of itself to show the author's individuality and independence, that to him we owe almost all the hints that we possess in reference to our Saviour's looks and gestures. The same thing is evinced, in this as well as in the other Gospels, by the frequent use of favourite expressions, some of which will be noticed in the exposition. Among these singularities of diction is the repeated introduction of Latin words and phrases, which has led to various conjectures, both as to the author and the class of readers whom he had immediately in view. That the latter were not Jews but Gentiles, is made probable, not only by this circumstance, but also by the frequent explanation of terms and usages, with which all Jews were perfectly familiar, and particularly by the Greek translation of our Lord's Aramaic or vernacular expressions, the occasional retention of which may be regarded as another striking feature of the second Gospel.

Besides all these distinctive marks belonging to the book before us, and abundantly establishing its claim to be regarded as an independent and original production, there is still another, more directly relating to its structure, and of more importance in its bearing on the question of its origin and mutual relation to the other Gospels. This is the circumstance that, unlike all the

rest, it contains scarcely any thing entirely peculiar to itself, its incidents and topics, with a few very limited exceptions, being common to it with the others, and especially with Luke and Matthew. Its remarkable resemblance to the latter, both in form and substance, early led to the mistake, still unfortunately current, of regarding Mark as an abridgment or epitome of Matthew. This error, although sanctioned by the great name of Augustin, is completely refuted by the fact, that Mark not only re-arranges much of the material which he has in common with Matthew, but in many instances adds graphic and minute details not found in Matthew; so that while his incidents are fewer, they are often far more fully and minutely stated, which is wholly at variance with the very idea of abridgment, except upon the arbitrary and unnatural assumption, that the writer, blending two almost inconsistent processes in one act, at the same time contracted and embellished his original.

Another error, of more recent date but equally untenable, is that of representing Mark as a compiler, who sometimes follows Luke and sometimes Matthew. This assumes of course that the traditional arrangement of the Gospels, which assigns to Mark the second place, and which was recognized by Origen as chronological, has really no such foundation. Indeed modern critical conjecture has in turn adopted every possible combination of the four names, and transported Mark not only to the last but to the first place in the catalogue, as the original and fundamental Gospel, out of which the others have been gradually amplified. The specious arguments, by which this last opinion is supported, although far from proving it to be correct, do serve to show the superficial shallow nature of the opposite extreme, which represents this Gospel as a mere epitome or compilation. The ease and plausibility, with which these opposite hypotheses may not only be propounded *a priori*, but carried out in detail when once assumed, only shows that they are founded upon no sufficient data, and ought not to be adopted as the basis of interpretation. It is just as easy, by the use of such means, to establish Mark's priority as Matthew's; and it is better therefore to expound them

as co-ordinate and independent, or to acquiesce in old and not incredible traditions with respect to them.

Among the oldest and most uniform of these traditions, so far as the main fact is concerned, although extremely variant in the details, is that which represents the second Gospel as embodying the vivid reminiscences of Peter, and composed in some sense under his direction. An ingenious living writer\* has improved upon this ancient statement, by supposing that the second Gospel was composed by Peter in his native language, and translated into Greek under the same divine direction and authority. The proofs of this position drawn from Peter's eminent position and the strong antecedent probability that he would have a part in the recording of his Master's history, and also from supposed traces of his knowledge and experience as a seaman, although inconclusive, are confirmatory of the old tradition that this Gospel is in some sense his, and does owe some of its most interesting contents to his recollections.

The name attached by uniform tradition to this Gospel as its author is the Roman one of *Mark* or *Marcus*. Upon this, with certain supposed military attributes of style and manner, another living writer of great eminence† has founded the remarkable opinion, that this Marcus was the Roman soldier sent to Peter by Cornelius (Acts 10, 7), and therefore mentioned by the former as his spiritual son (1 Pet. 5, 13.) The arguments in favour of this singular conclusion, though ingenious, are by no means likely to subvert the old traditional belief, that the Mark who wrote this Gospel was the John Mark, often named in Scripture as the son of a Christian woman in Jerusalem (Acts 12, 12), and a near relative of Barnabas (Col. 4, 10), who attended him and Paul from Jerusalem to Antioch (Acts 12, 25), and ministered to them in their mission to Cyprus (Acts 13, 5), but forsook them at Perga in Pamphylia (Acts 13, 13), and was afterwards a subject

\* Smith of Jordanhill, in a dissertation added to his "Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul," (2d edition, London, 1856.)

† Da Costa in his Lectures on the Gospels, called in the English version "The Four Witnesses." (New York, 1856.)

of dispute between them and returned with Barnabas alone to Cyprus (Acts 15, 37-39), but appears in Paul's epistles as a valued fellow-labourer with Luke and others (Col. 4, 10. Philem. 24. 2 Tim. 4, 11), which is perfectly consistent with his filial relation to Peter (1 Pet. 5, 23) as an older acquaintance and a spiritual father.

This Gospel has always formed a part of the New Testament Canon, being found in all the ancient catalogues as one of the *homologumena* or undisputed books, and quoted (or referred to) by the earliest Christian writers. The text has been preserved in many manuscripts, of which above five hundred have been critically collated. Of these about thirty are of the uncial class, written in capitals, and for the most part without stops, accents, breathings, or division of the words, all which are reckoned signs of later date. Among these are the four oldest copies of the Greek Testament known to be extant, and distinguished in the latest critical editions by the four first letters of the alphabet. A. The Codex Alexandrinus, in the British Museum. B. The Codex Vaticanus, in the Papal Library at Rome. C. The Codex Ephraemi, in the Imperial Library at Paris. D. The Codex Bezae, in the University Library at Cambridge. The precise date of these manuscripts is still disputed, but is now commonly agreed to range from the fourth to the sixth centuries inclusive. All the important variations of the oldest manuscripts, particularly those adopted by the latest critics, will be noticed in the exposition. The only portion of the book, whose genuineness has been called in question, is the last twelve verses of the sixteenth chapter, where the grounds of this opinion will be stated and disposed of.

Besides the preservation of the Greek text in these copies, the book has also been preserved in several ancient versions, the most important of which are the Syriac Peshito, made in the third if not the second century, and the Latin Vulgate, made by Jerome, on the basis of an old Italic version, near the close of the fourth century. Other early versions, from the third to the ninth century, are the Egyptian in two dialects, the Ethiopic,

Gothic, Armenian, Georgian, Arabic, and Slavonic. Occasional reference will be made, in the following exposition, to some modern versions, more especially to Luther's, and the six old English versions, those of Wiclif (1380), Tyndale (1534), Cranmer (1539), the Geneva Bible (1557), the Rhemish Version (1582), and King James's Bible (1611), the last of which is still in common use. Two of these, Wiclif's and the Rhemish, are translations of the Vulgate; Cranmer's is little more than a reprint of Tyndale's, with a few unimportant variations; the same is true, but in a less degree, of the Geneva Bible; while the common version, though to some extent influenced by all the others, is founded mainly upon Tyndale's, with occasional changes for the worse and for the better, but a frequent adherence to him even when in error.

Besides mere versions or translations, this book, in common with the other Gospels, has been a constant subject of interpretation from the earliest to the present times. In consequence, however, of the false position commonly assigned to it, as having no original or independent value, it has not received its due proportion of distinct consideration until recently, when some of the best writers have begun to treat it independently (though not irrespectively) of Luke and Matthew. This change for the better is especially observable in England, where it has been carried out by several of the latest and best writers on the Gospels. On the same principle the present exposition will be so conducted as to show the book to be a complete history in itself, harmonious with the other Gospels, and susceptible of illustration from them, but designed to answer a specific purpose and produce a definite impression. This idea of harmonious independence is suggested by the traditional but ancient title, the *Gospel according to Mark*, which has sometimes been erroneously explained as meaning that he was not its author but a mere penman or amanuensis. This, however, is no more true of the Gospels than of the Epistles, where the formula has never been applied by usage or tradition. The true sense of the phrase in question is that the Gospel has a fourfold form ( $\epsilon\nu\alpha\gamma\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\iota\omega\tau\epsilon\tau\rho\mu\sigma\phi\omega\eta$ ), and that this is

the particular aspect under which it is presented by the hand of Mark.

The present division into sixteen chapters was made by Cardinal Hugo, in the thirteenth century, to facilitate the use of his Concordance to the Latin Vulgate; and was not adopted in the copies of the Greek text till the fifteenth century. The division into verses first appears in the margin of Stephens's edition (1551), and is said to have been made by him during a journey between Paris and Lyons. The actual separation of the verses, by printing them in paragraphs, appears for the first time in one of Beza's editions (1565), and although discontinued in the latest publications of the Greek text, still prevails in most editions of the English Bible and of other modern versions. The history of these divisions should be clearly understood, in order to prevent their being thought original, or even ancient, and thereby to deprive them of an undue influence upon the exposition of the text itself. The distinction of the chapters in this book is sometimes injudicious and unskilful, and at best these conventional divisions are mere matters of mechanical convenience, like the paragraphs and pages of a modern book.

But while we make use of these mechanical contrivances for ease of reference and consultation, they must not be suffered to usurp the place of a more rational division growing out of the relations of the history itself, as a methodical and systematic whole, designed to answer a specific purpose. The most cursory inspection shows the book to be, as we have seen already, a connected narrative of Christ's public ministry, as introduced by John the Baptist and concluded by his own Ascension. The arrangement is both topical and chronological, the actual order of events being probably retained wherever it was not at variance with the writer's purpose of displaying, chiefly by examples, the character and method of our Saviour's work, his teachings and his miracles, his treatment of the law with its peculiar institutions, his preparatory steps towards the reorganization of the Church, the reception which he met with both from friends and foes, and the providential causes by which the catastrophe or crisis

of his history on earth was first retarded and then brought about.

In execution of this purpose, Mark begins with the preparatory work of John the Baptist and the preliminaries of Christ's own ministry, his baptism and temptation, his appearance as a teacher in Galilee, and the calling of his first disciples, with examples of his miracles, avowedly selected from a greater number, and the commencement of his itinerant ministry in Galilee, with its powerful effect upon the people, as evinced by the extraordinary concourse which attended him (ch. I.)

It entered into the design of the evangelist, not only to describe our Lord's success, but the malignant opposition of his enemies. He now presents the dark side of the picture, and enables us to trace the growth of this malignant opposition from its earliest appearance in a series of charges brought against him as a violator of the law; by claiming power to forgive sins; by holding intercourse with publicans and sinners, and even calling a publican to be one of his apostles; by his free and simple mode of life, involving the neglect (as they supposed) of all ascetic duties; and lastly by his frequent violation of the Sabbath (ch. II.)

But in spite of this increasing opposition, his fame and popularity were growing still more rapidly; and when they had attained their height, he takes his first step towards the re-organizing of the Church by formally embodying the twelve apostles. As the concourse still continues, he refuses to be checked in his labours, either by the well-meant but mistaken interference of his friends, or by the growing rancour of his enemies, who now accuse him of collusion with the Evil One; but solemnly repels both forms of opposition, by warning men against the unpardonable sin, and by asserting his own independence of all natural relations, when in conflict with the claims of his great spiritual family (ch. III.)

Besides selecting, training, and embodying the men by whom the Church was to be organized upon its new or Christian basis, Christ prepared the way for that great change by teaching men the principles on which his kingdom was to be established and

administered. This was one primary design of our Lord's parables, of which mode of instruction Mark gives both a general description and particular examples, setting forth the various reception of the Gospel, its independence of all human agency, and its expansive nature and design, by figures borrowed from the processes of husbandry (ch. iv.)

It becomes more clear as we proceed, that the evangelist's design was to illustrate, by alternate instances, the two great functions of our Lord's prophetic ministry, his teachings and his miracles, in their most intimate reciprocal connection as attesting and enforcing one another. Having thus exemplified his parabolic method of instruction, he resumes the account of his miraculous performances, presenting a new series of four miracles selected from the mass, not only on account of their intrinsic greatness, but as representing different kinds or classes of such wonders. The first shows his absolute dominion over winds and waves, as if they were his slaves ; the second his control of evil spirits, even in great numbers, and his power to regulate their presence and possession both of men and brutes ; the third his knowledge of the most secret and inveterate diseases and his power to heal them by mere contact with his person ; and the fourth his higher power over death itself, as exerted in his first recorded miracle of resuscitation (ch. iv. v.)

Reverting once more to the dark side of the picture, Mark describes our Lord's rejection by his oldest neighbours and acquaintances at Nazareth, but instantly contrasts with it his indefatigable labours, both in person and by proxy, through the agency of the apostles, whom he now commissions and sends forth, with powerful effect upon the people and their wicked ruler. The return of the apostles from their first experimental mission gives occasion to a new creative wonder, that of feeding the five thousand, followed by another proof of his capacity to rule the elements, and by a general description of his miracles in that same region and that period of his ministry (ch. vi.)

By another alternation and transition, clearly showing that the writer had a definite though complex end in view, he now

resumes the history of the Pharisaic opposition to our Saviour, and records a fresh attack upon him on account of his neglect and tacit condemnation of their superstitious baptisms, or uncommanded ceremonial washings, with his striking and authoritative answer, exposing their corruption of the law in this respect, and laying down important doctrines as to ritual and moral purity. With this, by a natural association, and perhaps by immediate chronological succession, is connected an account of our Lord's one visit to the Gentile world, and of a miracle performed upon a Gentile subject, under circumstances otherwise remarkable and unlike those of any other case recorded in the Gospels. The same thing is true of another miracle here added, which moreover is among the few found only in this Gospel (ch. vii.)

The care with which the writer thus far has avoided all unnecessary repetition, or the record of events precisely similar, draws additional attention to a second miracle by which a multitude was nourished with a little food, and shows that the evangelist regarded these as perfectly distinct events, and not as varying versions of the same. The opposition of the Pharisees now shows itself anew by demanding a peculiar proof of Christ's Messiahship, which he refuses, and admonishes his followers against their hypocritical formality. The series of his miracles here closes with another case peculiar to this Gospel, and the only one on record of a gradual or progressive restoration (ch. viii.)

Having thus exemplified, concisely yet as fully as his plan required, the progress both of the Messiah's work and of the opposition to it, Mark begins what may be called the second portion of his history, by showing how our Lord prepared his more immediate followers for the close of his career, by first eliciting a strong expression of their own belief of his pretensions, then predicting his own passion and their sufferings in his behalf, and warning them against the danger and temptation of denying him (ch. viii.)

These solemn and distressing premonitions are succeeded and relieved by a momentary anticipation of his glory, afforded to his three most confidential followers, which gives occasion to an au-

thoritative exposition of the prophecies respecting his forerunner. Then comes a miracle of dispossession, which all the parallel accounts place directly after the Transfiguration, and an unsuccessful effort to perform it by the nine who had been left behind on that occasion. This failure, at a time when he was so soon to leave them, leads to a fresh prediction of his death, and this to a humiliating strife for the pre-eminence, from which he takes occasion to explain the nature of his kingdom and the only mode of rising to distinction in it, with appropriate warnings against the corresponding sins and errors (ch. ix.)

The discourses and incidents which follow might have seemed incoherent, or at least without a definite relation to any general plan or purpose, but for certain intimations in the narrative itself, that they all chronologically appertain to Christ's last journey to Jerusalem. The topics thus connected and determined are, an answer to a question of the Pharisees in reference to marriage and divorce; an interesting vindication of the rights of children; a still more interesting exposition of the hinderances to men's salvation, and the only means by which they can be overcome; a fresh prediction of his passion, and a fresh display of blind ambition on the part of his disciples, and a fresh declaration of the nature of his kingdom and affecting exhibition of his own example, not only in words but by a miracle of healing wrought in the last stage of his journey to Jerusalem (ch. x.)

Having brought the Saviour to the scene of his last sufferings, the evangelist records with great particularity the principal occurrences which took place during the eventful week succeeding his arrival; his public recognition by the multitude as the Messiah, and his entrance as such into the Holy City; his purgation of the temple in the same capacity; his judicial and symbolical denunciation of the fig-tree. This varied assertion of his Messianic claims provokes a series of corresponding movements on the part of his opponents, beginning with a formal and official demand from the national authorities, as to the nature of his claims and the foundation upon which they rested. To this demand he makes no answer, save by an appeal to the testimony of

his forerunner, as a messenger from God, commissioned to prepare his way and to attest the truth of his pretensions (ch. xi.)

The rulers being thus foiled in their effort to suppress his Messianic measures, two of the adverse parties, the Herodians and Pharisees, unite in an insidious attempt to bring him into hostile collision either with the Jews or Romans. This endeavour also failing, the more frivolous Sadducees seek to throw contempt upon his teaching by a real or pretended case of doubt as to the resurrection, but are met by a solemn and an unexpected reassertion of that doctrine. A third question, rather curious than insidious or frivolous, was propounded by a Scribe, and had respect to the relative importance of the precepts in the decalogue, to which our Lord replied by quoting the familiar summary recorded in the Pentateuch itself. He then turns the tables by proposing an unanswerable question in relation to a Messianic prophecy, the true sense of which had been lost sight of, even by their spiritual leaders, and warns the people against leaders so unworthy to be trusted, both on account of their false doctrine and their covetous hypocrisy, with which he puts in striking contrast the small but self-denying contributions of an humble widow to the divine treasury (ch. xii.)

Having publicly assumed his Messianic office, and begun to exercise its powers; having defined his position with respect to the existing theocratical authorities, and by his denunciations cut off all hope of further tolerance or reconciliation; our Lord now bids farewell to the temple, with a solemn prophecy of its destruction. This is addressed to his disciples, whose inquiries with respect to the true premonitions of the great catastrophe afford occasion for a long prophetic discourse, in which he first tells them what are not and then what are the signs of the approaching end, concluding with an earnest exhortation to perpetual vigilance and constant preparation for his coming (ch. xiii.)

Having wound up the history of Christ's prophetic ministry, Mark now proceeds to treat of his sacerdotal work, beginning with the final resolution of the rulers to destroy him, coinciding with the treachery of Judas, as matured by an occurrence which

took place at Bethany and is here recorded. Then follows the last Jewish and first Christian passover, dividing yet connecting the two dispensations ; the prediction of his followers desertion and especially of Peter's fall ; the mysterious prelude to his final passion in the garden of Gethsemane ; his seizure and arraignment as a criminal before the Sanhedrim ; his refusal to defend himself, but final declaration, under oath, of his Messiahship ; his consequent conviction on the charge of blasphemy ; to which is added, as a sort of episode or supplement, the literal fulfilment of his prophecy respecting Peter (ch. xiv.)

Mark now proceeds to give the second part of the judicial process, namely, that which took place at the judgment-seat of Pilate ; Christ's avowal of his regal dignity, but silence with respect to the Jewish accusations ; Pilate's efforts to release him, but final submission to the people and their rulers ; the procession to the place of execution, and the actual crucifixion ; the coincidences tending to identify him as the subject of the Messianic prophecies ; the preternatural darkness ; the derision of his enemies ; his death upon the cross ; the rending of the veil, denoting free access to God, thrown open by his death to Jews and Gentiles ; and the recognition of his claims, by the officer who had charge of his execution, as well as by his female followers who witnessed it, and seem to have been providentially commissioned to supply the place of the apostles during their defection, by watching over his remains between the burial and resurrection (ch. xv.)

The whole history is now wound up by a narrative of Christ's Resurrection and Ascension, with his intermediate appearances to his disciples. This account, though really harmonious with those of Matthew, Luke, and John, is strikingly distinguished from them by the choice of incidents and facts recorded, a distinction satisfactorily explained by Mark's specific purpose to show how the incredulity of the eleven was gradually overcome ; first, by the testimony of the women ; then, by that of Mary Magdalene alone ; then, by that of the two disciples who returned from Emmaus ; and, lastly by the Saviour's actual appearance to them

selves. The whole narrative then closes with the renewal and enlargement of their great commission, his ascension into heaven, and their execution of his farewell orders (ch. xvi.)

This summary attempt to show beforehand that the book is not a desultory series of mere anecdotes or random recollections, but a systematic history, in which the topics are selected and arranged with constant view to a specific purpose, can be verified only by a patient process of detailed interpretation, to which this analysis may serve as a provisional basis and an introduction.



THE  
GOSPEL ACCORDING TO  
M A R K.

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CHAPTER I.

AFTER a general proposition of his theme or statement of his purpose (1), the Evangelist begins its execution, by describing the preparatory ministry of John the Baptist (2-8), and the preliminaries of our Lord's own ministry, to wit, his baptism and temptation (9-13). Then comes the history of the ministry itself, beginning with his first public appearance in Galilee (14-15), the vocation of his first disciples (16-20), two examples of his earliest miraculous performances (21-31), and a general description of their number and design (32-34). After a season of devotional retirement, he begins his itinerant ministry in Galilee (35-39), and by his miracles attracts great multitudes (40-45).

1. The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God ;

The simplest and most natural construction here is (*this is the beginning of (or here begins) the gospel, &c.*) It is then a title or description of the whole book, such as we often find in the first sentence of an ancient writing. (Compare the liturgical formula, "Here beginneth such a chapter ; here endeth such a lesson.") Some interpreters connect it with the next verse, the beginning of the gospel (was) as it is written in the prophets ; others with v. 4, 'the beginning of the gospel was John baptizing.' But these constructions seem too artificial, and the facts which they are meant to indicate, though not expressed here, are suggested by the context, namely, that the ministry of Christ was introduced by John's, and that both had been predicted in the ancient Scriptures. According to the syntax first proposed, the verse describes the whole book, or the book describes itself, as *the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God. Gospel*, according to its derivation both in Greek and English, means good news, glad tidings, though commonly applied in the classics to the reward paid for such intelligence. In the

dialect of Scripture it denotes by way of eminence the good news of salvation, or of Christ's appearance as a Saviour; then the history of his saving work, whether as orally related or as written by divine authority; and, lastly, the whole system of saving truth or Christian doctrine, of which the Gospel, properly so called, is the historical foundation. It is here used in the second of these senses, and denotes the history of our Saviour's ministry, his personal and public work on earth. The other constructions, above mentioned, suppose *gospel* to denote the ministry itself, or the act of preaching, which is contrary to usage. The subject of the history is *Jesus Christ the Son of God*. This is not a mere personal designation, but an official title or description, showing in what specific character the subject is to be presented, namely, as the Saviour of his people (*Jesus*); as the Messiah of the prophecies (*Christ*), i. e. the Anointed Prophet, Priest, and King of Israel; and, lastly, as *the Son of God*, not in the lower sense of creature, or the higher sense of one intensely loved, but in the highest sense of a divine person, a partaker of the Godhead, and sustaining the relation of eternal Sonship to the Father, from which both take their respective titles. Some interpreters dwell only on this last clause, and suppose Mark's Gospel to be distinguished by it from the others. But this description would be more appropriate to John's if taken by itself, which is forbidden by its intimate connection with the previous titles (*Jesus Christ*), which are equally significant, denoting the Anointed Saviour. We find, accordingly, that Mark presents our Lord as the Messiah and the Saviour no less than Luke and Matthew, although not precisely in the same form. The description of the subject here is not distinctive or exclusive, though specific and definite, admonishing the reader that the history which here begins is not that of a mere man or a private person, but of one who claimed to be the anointed, promised, and divine deliverer of his people from their sins (Matt. 1, 21.)

2. As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee;

Some interpreters, as we have seen, connect this in construction with the first verse, and understand it as denoting that the gospel, or the ministry of Christ, began in strict accordance with the prophecies. But if that verse be taken by itself as a descriptive title of the whole book, the one before us must be construed with what follows. *As it was written . . . (so) John was baptizing.* The writer's purpose here is to connect the ministry of Christ, through that of his forerunner, with the ancient Scriptures and the church of the Old Testament. This he does in a very striking form by quoting, at the outset of his narrative, the text of the Hebrew prophets, thus connecting the two canons in the closest manner, notwithstanding the long interval of four hundred years between them. As if he had said, in commencing the gospel of Jesus Christ, I am only recommencing the long broken series of divine

communications which terminated four hundred years ago in Malachi. The prophecy itself (Mal. 3, 1) is slightly varied, not in substance but in form, by being addressed to the Messiah as a pledge or promise, which, though not expressed, is really involved in the original. *Behold*, in Greek as well as Hebrew, introduces something unexpected and surprising. *I send* (am sending or about to send), the verb from which *apostle* is derived; *my messenger*, the Greek word commonly translated *angel*, which is indeed a mere abbreviation of it, but here used in its primary and wider sense. The original passage predicts the advent of two messengers or angels; the angel of the covenant, who is also represented as the Lord of the temple, and another who was to prepare his way before him. These two are here identified, the one expressly, and the other by necessary implication, with our Lord and his forerunner. *Prepare*, an expressive Greek verb, meaning to make fully ready, to equip or furnish. *Thy way*, thy advent or appearance. *Before thy face*, a literal translation of the Hebrew phrase, which means *before* in application both to time and space. In the Hebrew text it stands at the end of the sentence, in the oldest copies of Mark between the clauses, a transposition which has no effect upon the meaning. The repetition in the common text is found neither in the Hebrew nor in the oldest Greek manuscripts.

### 3. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

The function which Malachi ascribes to the forerunner, that of preparing the Messiah's way, is evidently borrowed from an older prophecy, still extant in Isaiah (40, 3), which Mark accordingly subjoins, as if it were a part of the same context, and as being really the theme of which the later passage is a variation or a new edition. Isaiah's words are commonly referred to the return from Babylon, of which, however, there is no express mention in the text or context. The image really presented to the prophet is that of God returning to Jerusalem, revisiting his people, as he did in every signal manifestation of his presence, but above all at the advent of Messiah, and the opening of the new dispensation, of which John the Baptist was the herald and forerunner. *The voice of one crying* is the Septuagint version of a Hebrew phrase which might be more exactly rendered *a voice crying*. (The oldest English versions have *a crier*.) It is a kind of exclamation, as if he had said hark! one cries (or is crying.) *In the wilderness*, both in the literal sense, thereby identifying John as the subject of the prophecy, and in the moral sense of spiritual desolation, in the midst of which, or through which, God was to return to them. *Prepare*, not the same Greek verb that is used in the preceding verse, although Isaiah and Malachi employ the same Hebrew one, denoting a specific kind of preparation, that of clearing a road by the removal of obstructions. This was to be done by repentance on the part of the people, and by preaching repentance on the part of the

forerunner. *Make straight*, in Hebrew one word, *straighten*, rectify, in reference either to obliquity of course or unevenness of surface, more probably the latter, as expressed in English by the verb *to level*. *Paths*, or worn ways, beaten tracks, as the Greek verb properly denotes. The corresponding Hebrew word is in the singular, and means an artificial causeway or high road. *His paths*, in the original, *a highway for our God*. These two predictions are combined by Mark, not inadvertently, much less through ignorance or by mistake, as some have foolishly imagined, but from a clear view of their mutual relation, as distinct and distant but harmonious predictions of the same event, which might therefore be regarded, after the fulfilment, as parts of one and the same prophetic utterance. The subordinate relation of the later to the earlier prophecy as such, though equally inspired, would account for the reading, *in Isaiah the prophet*, found in some old copies, and regarded as the true text by the latest critics. (A still stronger case of the same kind occurs in Matt. 27, 9.)

#### 4. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins.

As it was thus written centuries before, so was it now fulfilled. As Isaiah in prophetic vision heard the voice of one summoning the people to prepare the Lord's way, and as Malachi beheld one messenger or angel preparing the way for another, so in due time this preparatory process really began in the ministry of John the Baptist. *Was* (became or came) *baptizing*, i. e. exercising his ministry, of which baptism was the badge or seal. In outward conformity to the prediction, he appeared in the wilderness, i. e. as we learn from Matthew (3, 1), the wilderness of Judea, a phrase sometimes denoting the whole desert region west of the Dead Sea, and sometimes a particular division of it, here most probably the tract along the Jordan north of the Dead Sea. *Preaching*, proclaiming, publicly announcing. The idea of inviting and exhorting, though implied, is not expressed. *Baptism*, symbolical or ceremonial washing, such as the Mosaic law prescribed as a sign of moral renovation, and connected with the sacrificial types of expiation, to indicate the internal connection of atonement and sanctification. It was from these familiar and significant ablutions that John's baptism was derived, and not from the practice of baptizing proselytes, the antiquity of which as a distinct rite is disputed. *Baptism* (not *the baptism*) *of repentance*, i. e. a ceremonial washing, which involved and denoted a profession of repentance, or a thorough change of mind, both of judgment and of feeling, with respect to sin. *To (or for) remission*, i. e. with a view to it or for the purpose of promoting it, not directly or efficiently, but as an indispensable prerequisite. *Remission*, loosing, leaving, i. e. letting go unpunished, which is essentially the same with pardon or forgiveness. *Of sins*, without the article, not *the sins*, i. e. some sins, or the sins of some offenders, but of sins in general. The indefinite expressions of this

clause (*a baptism of repentance for remission of sins*) are not unmeaning or fortuitous, but designed to introduce John's ministry as something new and previously unknown to the reader. The meaning of the verse, as thus explained, is that the ancient prophecies just quoted were fulfilled in the appearance of a preacher in the wilderness calling the people to repent, and baptizing them in token of their having done so. Mark, like Matthew (3, 1), introduces John abruptly, as demanding notice only in connection with his public work and that of Christ; while Luke (1, 5-28, 39-80), as a professed historian, gives a full account of his extraction, birth, and early training for his office.

5. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

Having designated the place and described in general terms the nature and design of John's preparatory ministry, Mark now informs us how it was received and what were its effects. The statement relates only to Judea, as the province within which John began his ministrations, although in a desert part of it. The effect produced there is described as universal, the whole population going out to him from town and country. *All the land of Judea or Judean district, territory, province.* This was the southern portion of the land between the Jordan and the Mediterranean. It derived its name from the tribe of Judah, to which it was assigned on the conquest of Canaan by Joshua, although several smaller tribes were partially or wholly settled within its limits, namely, Dan and Simeon, while the portion of Benjamin adjoined it on the north. After the schism on the death of Solomon, this whole southern district adhered to the theocracy, and constituted the territory of the kingdom of Judah. Under the Syrian and Roman domination, it retained its old name in the Greek or Latin form of *Judea*, which is here used in its primary sense as an adjective agreeing with the noun *land* (or *province*). By a figure of speech common in all languages, the country is put for its population. *The Jerusalemites*, or people of Jerusalem, are not distinguished from the *Judeans*, under whom they were included, but merely rendered prominent among them as the people of the capital and holy city. All Judea, and among (or above) the rest, the people of Jerusalem. A like combination of the same names frequently occurs in the Old Testament. (See for instance the titles or inscriptions in Isaiah 1, 1. 2, 1. 3, 1.) It was characteristic of John's ministry, that he did not seek the people but was sought by them, in which respect he was a type or emblem of the law with its restrictive and exclusive institutions, as distinguished from the catholic or ecumenical provisions of the gospel. By a natural hyperbole, this vast concourse is described as submitting to the rite which John administered, not as an empty and unmeaning form, but at the same time *confessing their sins*, the Greek verb being an intensive compound, which denotes the act of free and full confes-

sion or acknowledgment. This, which is prescribed as a condition, although not a meritorious ground, of pardon (Prov. 28, 13. 1 John 1, 9), is therefore one of the best tokens of repentance. *The river Jordan* is the only considerable stream of Palestine, rising near the base of Mount Hermon, flowing southward in a double bed or valley, with a deep and rapid current, through the lakes of Merom and Tiberias, into the Dead Sea. Recent surveys and measurements have shown that the valley of the Jordan, with its lakes, is much below the level of the Mediterranean. This famous river formed the eastern limit of the province of Judea, and was probably the nearest water to the desert tract where John had made his first appearance. It was on account of this local contiguity, and for the accommodation of the crowds attending him, that John baptized there, and not for the convenience of immersion. Even those who plead for its necessity maintain that the three thousand converts on the day of Pentecost were thus baptized at Jerusalem, where there is not only no great river but a very scant supply of water. *Baptized*, i. e. bathed or washed as a religious rite. Even admitting that the word originally means immersed, and that the first converts were in fact immersed, both which are doubtful and disputed points, it no more follows that this mode of washing was essential to the rite, than that every *elder* must be an old man, or that the Lord's *supper* can be lawfully administered only in the evening. An analogous change in the familiar dialect of common life is furnished by an English phrase, *to take* (or *drink*) *tea*, which is frequently employed where no tea is consumed at all, the essential idea being that of a social evening meal, and the particular refreshment a mere incident. The extent of the effect ascribed in this verse to the ministry of John is not to be explained away as an extravagant hyperbole, but must be understood as almost if not absolutely universal. It seems to have entered into the divine plan, with respect both to Christ and his forerunner, that the whole mass of the chosen race, with few if any individual exceptions, should be brought within the sphere of their official ministry. If all Judea and Jerusalem does not mean every individual, it must at least mean something more than *many*, namely, the great bulk and body of the population. Matthew's account of the attendance on the ministry of John is equally emphatic, and perhaps still more so, as it adds to the two terms employed by Mark, *all the country about Jordan*, which would seem to include at least a portion of Perea, the Greek name of the province lying eastward of the river. Luke does not formally affirm but presupposes the vast concourse, when he tells us what John said *to the crowds* (or *multitudes*) *going out to be baptized by him*. (Matt. 3, 5. 6. Luke 3, 7.)

6. And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins ; and he did eat locusts and wild honey ;

He who was thus honored, both by God and man, far from being

"clothed in soft raiment," or "gorgeously appareled," and "living delicately" (Luke 7, 25), was distinguished by the plainness of his food and dress. He wore the coarsest kind of sackcloth made of camel's hair, still in use among the Arabs of the desert, fastened round him by a simple belt of skin or leather, in striking contrast with the "purple and fine linen" and "embroidered girdle" (Ex. 39, 29) of the sacerdotal dress, and of the fashionable oriental costume (Ex. 39, 29. Luke 16, 19.) In both parts of his dress here mentioned, John resembled Elijah, who is described as "an hairy man (i. e. clothed in hair cloth, as appears from what follows), and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins" (2 Kings 1, 8.) This is commonly explained as the official costume of an ancient prophet (compare Zech. 13, 4); but as Ahaziah, when he heard the description of his servants, instantly exclaimed, "It is Elijah the Tishbite!" it would seem to have been something distinctive of his person and not merely of his office. Now Elijah is conspicuous in the history of Israel as a reformer, and a preacher of repentance, sent to (or raised up in) the apostate kingdom of the ten tribes, to convince them of their sin, and warn them of the wrath to come. Of this stern mission his very dress was a badge or symbol; so was his austere and secluded life, especially his dwelling in the wilderness, when not engaged in some prophetic function elsewhere. Now the last of the Old Testament prophets, in addition to the promise of two messengers or angels, which has been already quoted and explained (on v. 2), closes the canon with a solemn prediction that Elijah the prophet should appear again (Mal. 4, 5. 6.) This last prophetic utterance of the Hebrew Scriptures kept the national hopes upon the stretch throughout the interval of four hundred years, during which the gift of prophecy was in abeyance. In the time of Christ it was the teaching of the scribes that Elijah was to come as the forerunner of Messiah; but our Lord taught his disciples that he had already come in the person of John the Baptist, of whom it was predicted by the Angel that he should go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to effect the very change foretold by Malachi. (See Matt. 17, 10-13. Luke 1, 17.) We find accordingly that John conformed to his example even in externals, as to place of residence and style of dress, not for the sake of a mere personal resemblance, but to symbolize the rigour and austerity belonging to the system of which they were both types and representatives. This view of the matter will suffice to show that the description which the gospels give of John's dress is not superfluous embellishment, but intended to identify two distant but closely related points of sacred history. The analogy, though less precise, is no less real, in relation to the food of the two prophets. As Elijah lived in a precarious manner, sometimes dependent upon miracle for food (1 Kings 17, 6. 16. 19, 6), so John subsisted upon aliment the most remote from that in common use, at least in towns and civilized society. The attempts which have been made to explain *locusts* as denoting some kind of bread, or of wild fruit, are equally superfluous and unsuccessful. The Greek word is the common one for locusts, which are still eaten by the Arabs of the

desert. *Wild honey* is supposed by some to be a vegetable exudation, sometimes so called; but there seems to be no sufficient reason for departing from the strict sense of the name as denoting the honey made by bees, not in hives or under human care, but in the rocks and forests of the wilderness. The whole impression made by these details is that of an austere simplicity, implying separation from the ordinary habits and abodes of men. Matthew's account (3, 4) is perfectly coincident with Mark's in substance, although so far different in form, and even in grammatical construction, as to show that one did not copy from the other.

7. And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

While Matthew and Luke here insert John's severe denunciation and impassioned warning, addressed to both the great contending parties in the Jewish church, and Luke adds his reply to the inquiries put to him by various classes, with a beautiful description of the popular suspicion that this might be the Messiah (Matt. 3, 7-10. Luke 3, 7-15), Mark simply gives the sum and substance of his preaching, also given by the others, and almost in the same terms, though not precisely in the same order. Having said before (in v. 4) that *John was* (or *came*) *preaching*, he now tells how and what he preached, not by reporting all that John said, even upon any one occasion, but by summing it all up in a single sentence, which he may or may not have delivered, once or often, *totidem verbis*. The summary thus given is that John's whole ministry was relative, prospective, and preparatory; that he was not a principal but a dependent; further removed from his superior in rank than the humblest domestic from his master; and that the same relation existed between the ministry and acts of the two parties. That he preached repentance is implied or presupposed, as having been already stated (in v. 4); but even this he did as a forerunner. *There cometh* (or is yet to come) *the mightier* (or *stronger one*) *than I*, not indefinitely *one mightier*, but specifically, *the mightier*, i. e. my superior, the principal of whom I am the herald and forerunner. But as this relation might exist between two persons nearly equal, or entirely so except in this particular association, John goes further, and assures them that the difference is not merely that of first and second, but of master and servant, nay, still more distinct and distant. For the meanest slave might loose the strap which bound his master's sandals to the soles of his feet; but to stoop for such a purpose, in the presence of John's master, was too great an honour even for the man whom all Judea and Jerusalem had crowded forth to be instructed and baptized by. To an oriental audience words could hardly have expressed the idea of disparity in a stronger or a more revolting manner. That John should have made such a profession of his own inferiority, not once but often, in the presence of the

people, and in the height of his amazing popularity, implies their disposition to regard and rest in him as the expected saviour; his own clear view of the subordinate relation which he bore to Christ; and his sincere and humble resolution to maintain it, even in the face of popular applause and admiration, and amidst the most enticing opportunities of self-aggrandizement.

8. I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

What was true of the persons was no less true of the acts which they performed, and the effects which they produced. If John was less, compared with Christ, than the meanest slave compared with his own master, what he did even by divine authority and as the Lord's legitimate forerunner, must be proportionably less than what his principal would do, as to intrinsic worth and power. The idea of contrast is enhanced by the very structure of the sentence, which exhibits the favorite antithesis of Greek prose composition, marked by corresponding particles ( $\mu\acute{e}v$  and  $\delta\acute{e}$ ), *I indeed.....but he, &c.* Common to both persons is the act of baptism (*I baptized.....he will baptize.*) The point of difference, according to the strict sense of the words, is the baptismal element or fluid; in the one case *water*; in the other, *holy spirit*, or (*the*) *Holy Spirit*; for although the article is not expressed in any of the Gospels, yet the constant use of this phrase to denote a divine person has almost rendered it a proper name, and as such not needing to be rendered definite by any prefix like a common noun. The antithesis is then not only between water and spirit, but between dead matter and a divine person, a disparity beyond all computation or expression. And even taking *holy spirit* in a lower and a more generic sense, we have a contrast almost infinite. Now this extreme, incalculable difference seems to be predicated of baptism as administered by John and Christ. But Christ baptized only by the hands of his disciples (John 4, 2), and this of course was no less water-baptism than that administered by John. The contrast therefore cannot be between John's baptism as performed with water, and that of Christ (or his disciples) as performed without it. Nor can it be intended to contrast Christ's baptism, as attended by a spiritual influence, with that of John, as unattended by it, which would then be worthless; whereas it is proved to be essentially identical with Christian baptism by its source, its effects, and its reception by our Lord himself. There are still two ways in which the verse may be explained, and each of which has had its advocates. The first supposes the antithesis to be, not between the baptism of John and that of Christ, which were essentially the same, but between the administering persons. 'I baptize you in water, not without meaning and effect, but an effect dependent on a higher power; he will baptize you in the same way and with like effect, but in the exercise of an inherent power, that of his own Spirit.' This construction, though it yields a

good sense and conveys a certain truth, is not so obvious and natural as that which supposes no allusion to the outward rite of Christian baptism at all, but a comparison between that rite, as John performed it, and the gift of spiritual influences, figuratively called a baptism, as the same term is applied to suffering (Matt. 20, 22, 23. Luke 12, 50.) The meaning then is, ‘I indeed bathe your bodies in water, not without divine authority or spiritual effect ; but he whose way I am preparing, is so far superior both in power and office, that he will bathe your very souls in the effusion of the Holy Spirit.’ Since this divine influence is always represented in the Old Testament, either as an unction or as an effusion, it could hardly be otherwise conceived of here ; and as the figurative baptism mentioned in the last clause must correspond in form with the literal baptism mentioned in the first, we have here an incidental proof that primitive baptism was not exclusively or necessarily immersion.

9. And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

The transition from John’s ministry to that of Christ is furnished by the baptism of our Lord himself, as the most important public act of the former, and an immediate preparation for the latter. At the same time it afforded the most striking confirmation of what John himself had taught as to his own inferiority, by means of an express divine recognition of our Lord as the Messiah. But this was not the only nor perhaps the chief end of our Lord’s subjection to this ceremonial form. Though without sins of his own to be confessed, repented of, or pardoned, he identified himself by this act with his people whom he came to save from sin (Matt. 1, 21) ; and gave them an assurance of that great deliverance ; avowed his own subjection to the law, as the expression of his Father’s will (Matt. 3, 15), and put honour upon John as a divinely inspired prophet and his own forerunner. Mark’s account of this transaction, although somewhat more minute than Luke’s, is not so full as Matthew’s, since it passes over the preceding conversation between John and Jesus (Matt. 3, 14–15.) On the other hand, it mentions the precise part of Galilee from which he came to be baptized in Jordan. This was Nazareth, the small town where Joseph and Mary lived before the birth of Christ (Luke 1, 26, 27), and where they again took up their abode on their return from Egypt (Matt. 2, 23. Luke 2, 39, 51.) The place can still be certainly identified in a small valley shut in by hills, on the northern edge of the great plain of Jezreel or Esdraelon, midway between the Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee. *In (or into) the Jordan* does not necessarily imply immersion, as the most convenient method even of affusion was to stand in the water (compare Acts 8, 36–39), especially for those who wore the flowing oriental dress, and either sandals or no covering of the feet at all. But even if John did submerge his converts, this was no more essential to the rite

than entire nudity, as still practised by the bathers in the Jordan. The two things naturally go together, and immersion without stripping seems to rob the rite in part of its supposed significance.

10. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him.

The baptism itself was followed by an audible and visible divine recognition of our Lord as the Messiah, which is said to have occurred *immediately*, a favourite word of Mark's, in whose gospel it occurs more frequently than in all the others put together, although here common to the three Evangelists. That it is to be strictly understood appears from the additional specification *coming up from the water*, not necessarily *from under* it, although he may have done so, but *away from* it, which is the strict sense of the preposition (*ἀπό*), or according to another ancient reading (*ἐκ*), *out of* it, i. e. from standing in it, as explained above. *The heavens*, a plural form borrowed from the Hebrew, in which the corresponding name has no singular, and therefore simply equivalent to *sky*. *Opened*, the expression used by Luke (3, 21), and Matthew (3, 16), is not so strong as that of Mark, correctly rendered in the margin of the English Bible, *rent* or *cleft*. (Wiclit, *cleft*.) The Greek verb is the root of the noun *schism*, and is itself applied to moral and religious changes (Acts, 14, 4. 23, 7.) The phrase as here used cannot possibly denote a flash of lightning, or the shining of the stars, or any thing whatever, but an apparent separation or division of the visible expanse of heaven; how occasioned or produced can only be conjectured. It seems to be here spoken of as if beheld by Jesus only; but in Matthew and Luke the language is more general, and John expressly says that the Baptist was to see and did see the descent of the Spirit (John, 1, 32, 33.) *As a dove*, in form, and not as some suppose, in motion merely, which would convey no definite idea. The choice of a dove as a visible emblem of the Spirit has been variously explained as referring to its gentleness, and the corresponding quality of Christ's own ministry (compare Matthew, 12, 19); to the brooding of the Spirit on the waters at the time of the creation (Gen. 1, 2); to the dove which Noah sent forth from the ark (Gen. 8, 8, 12); to the use of the same bird in sacrifice (Lev. 1, 14.) The truth taught by the visible descent was the personal union of the Son and Spirit, and the spiritual influences under which the Son was to perform his mission.

11. And there came a voice from heaven (saying), Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

The visible presence of the Spirit was attended by an audible testimony from the Father, in a voice which *came* or *became* (audible) *from* the (rent or opened) *heavens*. *Thou art my Son*, the very words

addressed to the Messiah in Ps. 2, 7, and from which the *Son of God* became one of his standing appellations. (See above, on v. 1, and below, on 3, 11. 5, 7. 14, 61. 15, 39.) The other words (translated in the older English versions, *thou art my dear Son in whom I delight*), are also borrowed from a Messianic prophecy (Isa. 42, 1), and describe him not only as an object of affection to the Father, which, indeed, is necessarily implied in that relation, but as an object of supreme complacency and approbation in the official character which he had undertaken. The oldest manuscripts and latest critics read *in thee* (like Luke) and not *in whom* (like Matthew.) Thus the baptism of Christ, besides the other purposes already mentioned, was the occasion of his public recognition and authoritative attestation, as the Son of God and as the true Messiah, before he entered on the actual discharge of his official functions.

12. And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.

13. And he was there in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan ; and was with the wild beasts : and the angels ministered unto him.

Another preliminary to the ministry of Christ and a link connecting it with that of John, is his temptation, of which Luke and Matthew give detailed accounts, but Mark only a brief summary, though quite sufficient to complete the chain of introductory events which he is here constructing. As his recognition by the Father and the Spirit followed immediately upon his baptism, so it was itself immediately followed by his visit to the wilderness. *Driveth*, literally casts out or expels (Wielif, *putted forth*), a strong expression for strong impulse urging him in that direction. *The Spirit* does not mean his own mind, much less the evil spirit, but the Holy Ghost, of which he was now full (Luke 4, 1.) The agency ascribed to this divine person is not that of tempting him (James 1, 13), but simply that of bringing him to the appointed scene of the temptation. The desert may be either that already mentioned as the place where John was preaching, or a portion of the great Arabian desert, which would render still more striking the analogy with the forty days' fast of Moses and Elijah in the peninsula of Sinai (Ex. 24, 18. 1 Kings 19, 8.) This analogy was no doubt meant to fix attention on our Lord's prophetic ministry, as similar in nature, though superior in dignity, to that of the old prophets, and presenting strong points of resemblance even in externals. As Moses was prepared for the work of legislation and Elijah for that of reformation, by fasting and seclusion in the desert for the space of forty days, so it pleased God that his Son should be prepared for his still more important work by a process of the same kind. *Being tempted*, either during this whole term, which is the natural meaning of the words used by Mark and Luke (4, 2), or at its close, the idea suggested by the words of Matthew (4, 2.) Both statements may indeed be true, i. e. he may

have been assailed by temptation during the whole period, but in a more concentrated, palpable form, at its conclusion. The enemy was not a human tempter, or the suggestion of his own mind, which was wholly free from error and corruption ; but the adversary of the human race, as such called *Satan*, and as its slanderer the *Devil*. Whatever other ends may have been answered by our Lord's temptation in the wilderness, one main design was to prefigure and exemplify that bitter and protracted warfare which had been predicted just after the fall, between the *seed of the serpent* and the *seed of the woman* (Gen. 3, 15), the former including, with the fallen angels, all of human kind who should espouse their cause and yield to their authority ; the latter Christ the Head, but in its wider sense the members of his body. This strife, which gives complexion to all later history, attains its crisis or its climax in the ministry of Christ, and more especially in those mysterious conflicts with the powers of darkness, which attended its opening and its close. (See below, on 14, 32-36.) The victory which Christ achieved in this contention was a pledge and foretaste of the triumphs in reserve for all who trust in his grace and follow his example. That *he was with the beasts* is mentioned only in this gospel, and should be regarded not as a poetical description of the desert, which would be superfluous and out of place in so concise a narrative, but rather as an intimation that he was beyond the reach of human help, and cut off from all ordinary sources of supply, and also as a preparatory contrast with what follows, that *the angels waited on him*, served him, an expression which is specially applied in usage to the service of the table, or that which has respect to the supply of food, and therefore possibly involving an allusion to the fast, not mentioned here, but explicitly recorded both by Luke and Matthew, as the pretext and occasion of the first temptation. This difference, far from being inconsistent, as some writers represent it, is precisely such diversity as constantly occurs between the most harmonious witnesses in courts of justice, one supplying what the other has omitted, or directly stating what the other only hints at. An old ecclesiastical tradition gives the name of *Quarantania*, denoting the scene of our Lord's forty days' fast, to a desert tract between Jerusalem and Jericho. Another ancient and traditional memorial of this chapter in history is the observance of Lent as a period of religious abstinence.

14. Now, after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

Having thus presented the preliminaries of our Saviour's ministry, Mark now proceeds to the ministry itself, which is the great theme of his narrative. Like Matthew and Luke, he seems to describe it as beginning in Galilee, the northern province of the land of Israel, separated from Judea by the district of Samaria. But we learn from John (1, 19-52. 2, 13-25. 3, 1-36. 4, 1-42), that he was publicly recognized by his forerunner and began his own work in Judea. This

has been malevolently represented as a contradiction ; but in neither of the first three gospels is it said that this was his first appearance as a public teacher ; and two of them explicitly restrict their narrative to what happened after John's imprisonment (compare Matt. 4, 12), and the third speaks of Jesus as returning to Galilee in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4, 14), which implies the previous exercise of his official functions elsewhere. The only question is, why the first three gospels should have omitted what took place in Judea, and begun with his appearance in Galilee. So far as this demand requires or admits of any answer, it is furnished by the obvious considerations, that Christ's appearance in Judea was intended merely to connect his ministry with that of John, by letting the two co-exist or overlap each other, like the two dispensations which they represented. As the forms of the Mosaic Law continued to exist by divine authority long after they were virtually superseded by the advent of Messiah and the organization of his kingdom, as if to show that the two systems, although incompatible and exclusive of each other as permanent institutions, were alike in origin, authority and purpose, the one being not the rival or the opposite, but the completion of the other ; so our Lord, whose presence was to supersede the ministry of John, appeared for a time in conjunction with him, and received his first disciples from him, as a proof that John had only begun the work which he was to accomplish. When this joint ministry, if it may be so called, was terminated by the imprisonment of John, our Lord passed through Samaria into Galilee, where he had been brought up, and where he was to be rejected by his neighbours and acquaintances as well as to perform the greater part of his prophetic functions. The imprisonment of John is barely mentioned by Mark as suggesting the time and the occasion of our Lord's withdrawing from Judea, whereas all the circumstances are related here by Luke (3, 19. 20), and in another place by Matthew (14, 3-5.) *Put in prison* (Wyclif and Tyndale, *taken*), more exactly rendered in the Rheinish version, *delivered up*, i. e. by Herod to the jailer (compare Luke 12, 58), or by Providence to Herod himself (compare Acts 2, 23.) We learn from John (4, 1), that the followers of Christ already outnumbered those of his forerunner even in Judea, and that the notice taken of this fact by the dominant party of the Pharisees was one cause of his going into Galilee. *Preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God*, i. e. proclaiming, publishing the good news that the reign of the Messiah, so long promised by the prophets and expected by the people, was begun. (See Dan. 2, 44. 7, 13. 27. 9, 24-27.)

15. And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand : repent ye, and believe the gospel.

As in the case of John, Mark gives the theme and substance of Christ's preaching, not on any one occasion, but throughout his ministry, or at least in its commencement, which is here immediately re-

fferred to. *The time is fulfilled*, i. e. the set or appointed time for the Messiah's advent has arrived; *his reign* (or that of God in him) *has approached*, is at hand, nay, is actually come. This eventful crisis brought with it certain duties and responsibilities. *Repent*, including the ideas of reflection, afterthought, and change of mind, i. e. of judgment and of feeling, upon moral subjects, with particular reference to the character and conduct of the penitent himself. Sorrow or grief, although a necessary incident, is not the essence of a genuine repentance. (Wiclif has, *do penance*; the Rhemish version, *be penitent*; the Geneva Bible, *amend your lives*.) *Believe the gospel*, literally, *in the gospel*, which includes not only its reception or acknowledgment as true, but reliance on it as a means of safety or a method of salvation. *The gospel*, this good news, these glad tidings of Messiah's advent and the erection of his kingdom, for the very purpose of saving his people from their sins (Matt. 1, 21.) This form of statement seemed to show that the salvation now proclaimed was not a new and independent method of escape from sin and punishment, but one which had been long predicted and prefigured in the old economy.

16. Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

Although it formed no part of our Lord's personal mission to re-organize the Church, a change which was to rest upon his own death as a corner-stone, and must therefore be posterior to it, he prepared the way for this great revolution by selecting and training the men who should accomplish it. Omitting certain previous steps afterwards supplied by John (1, 35-52), Mark proceeds at once to the vocation of the first apostles, as if before unknown, but not expressly so described. This kind of harmonious variation is among the most familiar attributes of credible evidence in courts of justice, though absurdly represented by the German sceptics and their imitators elsewhere as an irreconcilable contradiction. The rigid application of the same rule would discredit more than half the testimony now received as valid in the courts and jury-rooms of England and America. *Walking about*, not listlessly or idly, but in the performance of his work as a proclaimier or announcer. *Along the sea of Galilee*, the lake through which the Jordan flows, along the east side of the province so called (see above, on v. 5.) This use of the word *sea*, though lost in modern English, is retained in German (*See*) with specific reference to inland lakes. The one here meant is also called the lake of *Genessaret* (Luke 5, 1), in Hebrew *Cinnereth* (Deut. 3, 17), or *Cinneroth* (1 Kings 15, 20), from a city and district on the western shore (Josh. 19, 35. Num. 34, 11.) A third name is the sea (or lake) of *Tiberias*, from a city built by Herod on the southwest shore, and named in honour of the Emperor Tiberius (John 6, 1. 21, 1.) The lake is about twelve miles long and half as many wide, in a deep basin surrounded by hills. It is still

famous, as of old, for its clear pure water, abundant fish, and frequent storms. From among the fishermen on this lake Christ selected his first followers, four of whom are here named, being two pairs of brothers. *Simon*, a Greek form of the Hebrew *Simeon*, which is sometimes retained in reference to the same and other persons. (Luke 2, 25. 3, 30. Acts 13, 1. 15, 14. 2 Pet. 1, 1. Rev. 7, 7.) *Andrew* is an old Greek name (*Andreas*), showing the knowledge of that language in Palestine, and furnishing an instance of the Jewish practice of adopting Gentile names, either exclusively or in conjunction with their native ones. Simon, though first named here, and afterwards the foreman of the apostolical body, had been previously brought to Christ by Andrew, one of the two disciples of John who heard him bear witness to Jesus as the Lamb of God, and followed him (John 1, 35-43.) After this first acquaintance they appear to have continued their employment on the lake, perhaps expecting such a call as the one here recorded. *Casting a net* is a peculiarly expressive phrase in Greek, where the verb and noun are cognate forms, the essential idea being that of *throwing about* or *round*, in reference either to the nets enclosing the fish, or to its being cast in different directions. *They were fishermen*, not only so employed at that time, but habitually, constantly, as their profession.

17. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

Passing over the extraordinary draught of fishes which Luke here relates, but saying nothing inconsistent with it, Mark records the call of these two brothers as a necessary link in the chain of his historical deduction. *Come after me*, or more exactly, *hither! behind me*, not only in the literal and local sense, but in the moral or figurative sense of adherence and dependence. The last clause is a beautiful allusion to their former occupation as a figure of the one which they were now to undertake. The comparison, like others, is not to be pressed too far, the main points of resemblance being the value of the objects to be caught, the necessity of skill as well as strength in catching them, and the implied promise of abundance and success. As the business of their lives had hitherto been only to provide for the subsistence of the body, by securing the bodies of inferior animals for food; so now they were to seek the souls of men, not to destroy but to save them, in the way of God's appointment, and as a necessary means for the promotion of his glory.

18. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.

The effect of this abrupt call is described as instantaneous, not only because they were expecting and prepared for such a summons, but because they were divinely moved to answer and obey it. *Leaving*

*their nets*, not only for the present but forever, as their permanent employment and the means of their subsistence. At the same time the words seem to suggest, as their immediate and strict sense, that the fishermen thus summoned left their nets lying where they were, without waiting to deposit or secure them. This unhesitating response to the divine call, without regard to minor consequences, is presented elsewhere as a severe but equitable test of true devotion to the Master's service (Luke 9, 57-62.)

19. And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the (son) of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets.

Another pair of brothers was to be called to the same service at the same time. *Advancing*, going forward, from the place where Simon and Andrew had been called, and now no doubt attended by them, *he saw James the (son) of Zebedee and John his brother*, one of whom, most probably the latter, is commonly supposed to have been the other disciple of the Baptist, who with Andrew followed Jesus when acknowledged by their Master as the Lamb of God (John 1, 41.) *Them too (or also) in the ship*, or rather boat, *mending* (preparing or finishing) *the nets*, of which they were accustomed to make use. The word translated *ship* means any thing that sails, corresponding more exactly to *craft* or *vessel*, than to *ship*, which in modern usage commonly implies a certain size if not a certain form and structure. The vessels here meant were small fishing smacks, propelled both by sails and oars, and drawn up on the shore when not engaged in actual service. The translation *ship* was introduced by Tyndale; Wiclif has the more exact term, *boat*.

20. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

Here again the effect was an immediate one, and rendered still more striking by the fact that they left not only their nets and their boat, but their father who was in it, and probably employed in the same manner. *With the hired (men)*, hirelings, not necessarily domestics, servants, but more probably the fishermen in their employ. This circumstance appears to have been added for the two-fold purpose of suggesting that they did not leave their father without help or company, but no doubt just as able to continue his business as when his sons were with him; and also that the men thus called to follow Christ were not of the lowest class, or driven by necessity to change their mode of life, but had the means, or were the sons of one who had the means of employing others to assist them in their business. The idea that Zebedee was dependent on his sons, and therefore injured by

their leaving him, is not expressed nor even necessarily implied, but rather that he was the master of the boat and the director of the fishery, in which he was assisted by his own sons and by fishermen hired for the purpose. Still more extravagant and groundless is the notion of extreme age and infirmity, which some use to aggravate the charge of undutiful neglect alleged against James and John. Even in the supposed case, the call of Christ would have superseded every other claim and obligation (compare Matt. 8, 21, 22. Luke 9, 61, 62); but no such extreme case seems to have existed, and we have neither right nor reason to invent it. The completeness of their separation from their previous connections and devotion to their new one is suggested by Mark's saying, not simply that *they followed him*, as Luke and Matthew do, but that *they went off* (or *away*) *behind him*.

21. And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath-day he entered into the synagogue and taught.

Having now described the ministry of Christ in Galilee, and stated his first measures for the organization of an auxiliary body, Mark proceeds to show by what credentials his legation was attested. Its authority did not rest merely on his own assertion, though intrinsically all-sufficient, but was proved to be from God, not by evidence exterior to and independent of itself, but by its own essential functions, those of teaching and working miracles, both which belonged to his prophetic office, having both been exercised by former prophets, not as distinct and independent powers, but reciprocally aiding one another and combining to attest their own divine authority. Instead of general description, Mark illustrates our Lord's method of proceeding by particular examples, no doubt drawn from the first period of his ministry in Galilee, though not the very first occurrences of this kind, as we learn from John's account of earlier instances (John 2, 1-12, 23, 4, 46-54). *They* (i. e. Jesus and the followers whom he had already called) *enter into Capernaum*, the Greek verb implying that they journeyed to it from a distance. This was a town on the west side of Genessaret, not named in the Old Testament, and only once in the writings of Josephus. It has long since perished, and its very site is now disputed, although probably marked by the present village of Khan-Minyeh, at the north end of the plain or district of Genessaret, near a spring which Josephus calls the fountain of Capernaum. After our Lord's rejection at Nazareth, which Luke has recorded in detail, he made Capernaum the centre of his operations, and the ordinary place of his abode when not engaged upon his circuits. (See Luke 4, 16-31.) It is a probable, though not a necessary supposition, that the circumstances here related took place on his first removal from Nazareth, and are therefore the beginning of his ministry at Capernaum. *Immediately*, without delay, he enters upon one of his official functions, that of teaching, making use of the facilities afforded for that

purpose by the Jewish institutions of the Sabbath and the Synagogue. The observance of the seventh day as a sabbath or religious rest, prescribed at the creation (Gen. 2, 3), and re-enacted at the exodus from Egypt (Ex. 20, 8-11), to commemorate the rest of the Creator from his six days' work, and that of Israel from Egyptian bondage, was observed with more and more punctilious rigour in the later periods of their history, particularly in the Babylonian exile, when the ceremonial law was in abeyance, and the Jews were outwardly distinguished only by circumcision and the Sabbath. Upon this day, from the earliest times, it had probably been customary to assemble for religious worship under the direction of the hereditary elders of the tribe or vicinage. These meetings were called *synagogues* in Greek, and were no doubt continued with redoubled zeal during the captivity, and perhaps with more of a distinct organization than was needed originally and at home. It is probable, however, that many of the regulations commonly described as belonging to the ancient synagogue, are of later date, and caused by the dispersion of the people throughout various countries. There is nothing in the text of the New Testament, at least, to show that the synagogues in the time of Christ were any thing more than the ancient gatherings of the people for worship under their national hereditary elders, who in that capacity were *elders* or *rulers of the synagogue* (see below, on 5, 22.) By a natural metonymy the name (like *church*, *school*, *court*, in English) is occasionally transferred to the place of meeting, but without disturbing its original and proper import. Of this truly national and sacred usage, that of meeting on the Sabbath for religious worship, our Lord immediately availed himself, as furnishing the most direct and easy access to the more devout and serious portion of the people. The service of the synagogue appears to have been eminently simple, consisting in prayer and the reading of the Scriptures, with stated or occasional exhortation. That our Lord was permitted to perform this duty without any seeming opposition or objection, may be explained either from the liberty of speech allowed on such occasions by the ancient usage, or from his general recognition, even by his adversaries, as a gifted teacher. *He taught*, being here in the imperfect tense, may be understood to signify his general habit, or, as vs. 21-27 refer to a particular occasion, it may mean that *he was teaching* (as the Rhemish version renders it) on the day in question, when the subsequent occurrences took place.

22. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

A highly important feature in the history of Christ's ministry is the impression or effect of his teaching on the multitudes who heard it. This is here described, perhaps in reference to one particular occasion, but in terms admitting of a general application, and substantially repeated elsewhere (see below, 6, 2, 11, 18, and compare Matt. 13, 54. 22, 33. Acts 13, 12.) The grand effect was that of wonder or astonish-

ment, *they were struck*, literally *struck out*, driven from their normal or customary state of mind by something new and strange. The object or occasion of this wonder was *his doctrine*, not his *learning*, as Tyndale and Cranmer have it, unless they use that term in its old sense (now regarded as a vulgarism) of *teaching*, which is Wiclif's version; nor the truth taught, which is now the common use of *doctrine*; but as the Greek word usually means in the gospels, either the act or mode of teaching. That this is the meaning here, we learn from the reason given for their wonder. This is stated in the last clause negatively, *for he was* (then as habitually) *teaching them not as the scribes*. His instructions are here brought into direct comparison with those of a certain well-known class, who must of course be teachers. This is a sufficient refutation of the error that the scribes were either clerks to magistrates, or mere transcribers of the Scriptures. As the successors of Ezra, the first scribe of whom we read in this sense (Ezra 7, 6), they were the conservators and guardians of the sacred text and canon, which implies a critical acquaintance with them, such as qualified the scribes above all others to be expounders of the Scripture likewise. Although rather a profession than an office, they exerted a commanding influence on public opinion, and are repeatedly referred to as authoritative teachers of religion. (See below, on 12, 35, and compare Matt. 23, 2-4. Luke 11, 52.) The point of difference is indicated in the positive statement that *he taught* (or *was teaching*) *them as (one) having authority*. This cannot refer to a dogmatical authoritative manner, as to which the scribes most probably surpassed all others. Nor does it mean *powerfully*, as explained by Luther. The only sense consistent with the usage of the terms and with the context is that he taught them, not as a mere expounder, but with the original authority belonging to the author of the law expounded. This is not a description of mere outward manner, but of that self-evidencing light and self-asserting force, which must accompany all direct divine communications to the minds of creatures. Even those who were most accustomed and most submissive to the teachings of the scribes, must have felt, as soon as Jesus spoke, that he was speaking with authority, declaring his own will, and expounding his own law, not that of another. The distinction therefore is not merely between traditional and textual instruction, but between two forms or methods of the latter.

23. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

But this was not the only proof of his divine legation as a teacher. It was attested also by the exercise of superhuman power. The miracles of Christ were not intended merely to relieve suffering, but to open men's minds to the reception of the truth, and to authenticate it as such. That both these ends might be promoted by the same means, nearly all his miracles were miracles of mercy, and a large proportion miracles of healing. From among the earliest Mark chooses two, both wrought at Capernaum, one in public (vs. 23-28), and one in private (vs. 29-31.)

The first was in the synagogue or stated meeting for religious worship, where a man was present in *an unclean spirit* (as Wiclif literally renders it, while Tyndale and Cranmer paraphrase it, *vexed with*), i. e. in intimate union with a fallen angel, who was suffered to occupy his body and to influence his mind, but only with persuasive not coercive power. The frequency of such demoniacal possessions in the time of Christ is to be referred to an express divine appointment, intended to put honour on the Saviour as the victor in that war between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, which reached its crisis during his personal presence upon earth (see above, vs. 12, 13.) The epithet *unclean* has reference to the moral character and state of these intrusive spirits. The less specific but essentially synonymous phrase, *evil* (i. e. wicked) *spirits*, is occasionally used by Luke (7, 21. 8, 2.) The loud cry, often mentioned in such cases, was no doubt of such a nature as to indicate the presence of a foreign agent, speaking either through or without the organs of the man possessed. The terms used here and elsewhere show that the historian looked upon these evil spirits as possessing real personality, and not as mere personified diseases.

24. Saying, Let (us) alone ; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth ? art thou come to destroy us ? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

Besides the attestation of Christ's mission which was to be yielded by the dispossession of the demon, one was volunteered, as it were, by the demon itself, in the form of a protest or expostulation with our Lord for interrupting his possession and dominion. *Let us alone*, literally, *let*, permit, suffer (us to be as we are), without disturbing our actual condition. This prayer, or rather insolent demand, is founded on an indirect denial of his right to interfere, interrogatively expressed. *What to us and to thee ?* i. e. what is there common to us or connecting us ? Thy domain or sphere is wholly different from ours. The plural pronoun may have reference to the evil spirits as a class or body, of which this one was a member and a representative. The sense will then be, what hast thou to do, what right hast thou to interfere, with that mysterious world of spirits to which we belong, and which, though suffered to exert a physical and moral influence on man, are of a species altogether different, and therefore not amenable to thee, a man. Or the plural may have reference to the demon and the man possessed, as having for the time one interest and will. The sense will then be, what hast thou to do with me and this my victim ? leave us to ourselves. The first of these constructions agrees best with the remainder of the sentence. *Art thou come* (or *thou art come*) *to destroy us*, not the demon and the man together, for the latter was to be set free by the expulsion of the former, but us, the seed of the serpent in the proper sense, the devil and his angels, the infernal corporation of which this one was a single representative. This foreboding of destruction was not mere imagination, but an inference from what the demon knew of our Lord's person and office. *I know thee*, not as an acquaintance, but by

fame or by report. *Who thou art*, thy nature and the end for which thou hast appeared. *The holy one of God* is not a description of mere moral quality, except as something incidental or implied, but of official character. The one whom God has designated, set apart, equipped, and furnished for this great work of destruction. The divinity of Christ, or his identity with a divine person, does not seem to have been known to the spirit, but only that the man whom he addressed was one, to use his own expressions, whom the Father had sanctified and sent into the world (John 10, 36), i. e. chosen and commissioned for an extraordinary service.

25. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

Far from accepting this testimony at the mouth of the demoniac, or rather of the demon, Christ rebuked his impious audacity, forbade him to speak further, and commanded him to leave his victim. *Hold thy peace*, in Greek a passive verb, strictly meaning, *be thou muzzled*, silenced (Wiclif, *wax dumb*), and implying a coercive or restraining power accompanying the command. *Come out of him*, abandon that mysterious union which exists between you, and thus leave him in his natural condition. This last clause clearly recognizes two distinct personalities, neither of which can be resolved into a figure any more than the other.

26. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

The effect of the command is here described, and is just what might have been expected in the case of a real demoniacal possession. The evil spirit yields, but with reluctance, and not without a parting exhibition of impotent malignity. *Tearing him*, a strong but natural expression for convulsions, or the violent contortion and spasmodyc agitation of the body. *Crying with a great voice*, either as a natural expression of pain upon the part of the demoniac, or of rage and spite in the departing demon. If all this can be resolved into a strong metaphorical description of an epileptic fit, as some pretend, then any other statement of the history may, with equal plausibility, be explained away.

27. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine (is) this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

The effect on the spectators is described as powerful and universal, *they were all amazed*. Nor was this amazement a mere stupid and unreasoning affection, but one that prompted to reflection and to rational inquiry. *So as to argue (or dispute) among* (literally, *to or with*) *themselves*. (*Questioned* is borrowed from the Rhemish version;

Wyclif has *thought*, Tyndale *demanded*.) *What is this?* what is the meaning of this new and strange occurrence, this mysterious dialogue and strife between a man and an evil spirit, and the still more wonderful submission of the latter? Their next question shows that they did not regard it as a mere chance-wonder, but connected it with his pretensions as a teacher. *What (is) this new doctrine*, i. e. mode of teaching, with reference not so much to the truth taught as to the evidence by which it was attested. Why they called it a new doctrine, they explain themselves, to wit, because he claimed and exercised authority, not only over human minds, but over fallen angels, though belonging to another race and sphere of being. Nor was this a mere assertion or pretension upon his part, but attested, verified, by actual obedience on the part of these mysterious and unhallowed visitants. The reasoning here recorded shows the effect of our Lord's miracles in authenticating his divine legation, while at the same time they relieved a vast amount of human suffering. In no cases were these two ends more effectually answered than in that of which we here have an example, and in which there was a fearful complication of bodily and mental, physical and moral ailments, and of temporal and spiritual, human and satanic agencies.

28. And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

Besides the immediate effect thus produced on those who witnessed this miracle and others like it, there was a more extensive influence exerted by all such performances, of great importance to the success of our Lord's ministry. This was the diffusion of his fame, both as a teacher and a wonder-worker, to a distance, thus promoting the important end of bringing the whole population to the knowledge of his claims and doctrines. This effect, we are told, in the present case, was instantaneous and extensive, as *his hearing*, i. e. what was heard of him, his fame, report, or reputation (Rhemish version, *bruit*), *went out* (from Capernaum, where the miracle was wrought) *into the whole surrounding part of Galilee*, or *into the whole region around* (Tyndale, *bordering on Galilee*), implying a still further extension of his fame, beyond the limits of the Holy Land, into the Syrian and Phœnician territory, where we know that it did penetrate. (See Matt. 4, 24. 15, 21. Luke 6, 17.) Thus every miracle, besides relieving its immediate subject, and disposing him and all who saw it to the reception of the truth, helped to make our Lord more generally known, and to excite a spirit of inquiry with respect to him and his religion.

29. And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

To this public miracle Mark adds one of a more private and domestic kind, but in this case also, only as one instance out of many. This one

was wrought in the bosom of a family with which our Lord had now contracted intimate relations, that of Simon Peter, whom we thus learn incidentally to have been married, and a householder at Capernaum, in conjunction with his brother Andrew. This is not inconsistent with the mention of Bethsaida elsewhere (John 1, 45), as "the city of Andrew and Peter." They are not here said to have been natives of Capernaum, nor even to have long resided there. As the very name *Bethsaida* means a fishery or place for fishing, and was common to more villages than one upon the lake (see below, on 6, 45), it is probable that Peter and his brother lived there while engaged in that employment, and removed to Capernaum when Jesus chose it as the centre of his operations. It is even possible that Simon opened a house there for the convenience of his Lord and Master in the intervals of his itinerant labours. Mark adds what is omitted both by Luke (4, 38) and Matthew (8, 14), that Jesus was attended from the synagogue to Simon's house by James and John, the other pair of brothers whom he called at the same time with Simon and Andrew. (See above, v. 19.)

30. But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever; and anon they tell him of her.

Not only was this miracle performed in Simon's house, but on a member of his family, his wife's mother (or as the older English versions render it, his *mother-in-law*), who seems to have resided with him. *She was lying down*, confined to bed, with fever, in Greek the participle of a verb which means to be feverish, or to have a fever. Luke's more particular description (4, 38) is by some regarded as professional (Col. 4, 10.) *Immediately*, as soon as he had come in from the synagogue, *they tell him of her*, speak to him concerning her, which may include not only information with respect to her disease, but a request that he would heal her, as expressed by Luke, *they asked him about her*, i. e. whether she was curable, and whether he would cure her.

31. And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

As we never read of Christ refusing finally to work a miracle of healing, such a refusal was least of all to be expected here, where one so nearly related to his principal disciple was the sufferer. Accordingly we find him promptly answering the prayer of those around her. *Coming to her*, i. e. entering her chamber, and approaching the bed on which she lay, *he raised her* from her prostrate or recumbent posture, *seizing her hand*, or laying hold upon her by the hand. Bodily presence and immediate contact, although not essential to the working of a miracle, and therefore frequently dispensed with (see below, on 7, 29), were in most cases used to show from whom the healing influence proceeded, and establish a perceptible connection between him and the person

healed. The effect was the cessation of the fever, not by slow degrees but instantaneously. The completeness of the restoration was evinced by her returning to her ordinary household duties, so that she who just before lay helpless in their presence, was now serving them or waiting on them, no doubt with particular allusion to supplying them with food, which is the proper meaning of the Greek verb (see above, on v. 13.) The plural pronouns (*they* and *them*) are both indefinite, with a little difference in extent of meaning. *They* means the members of the household, or at most the company, excluding both the Saviour and the woman. *Them* no doubt denotes all present, with the exception of the woman, who is the subject of the clause. This use of the pronouns is common in all languages, and is especially familiar in the dialect of common life.

32. And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.

One of the commonest and grossest errors in relation to the miracles of Christ is, that they were few in number, or that they are all recorded in detail. To guard against this very error, after recording two particular miracles of healing at Capernaum, Mark adds a general statement of his other miraculous performances at the same time and place, from which we may obtain a vague but just idea of their aggregate amount. In the evening of the same day upon which he healed the demoniac in the synagogue and cured the fever in the house of Simon, all the sick of the city were collected there. The mention of the evening and of sunset does not imply any scruple on our Lord's part as to healing on the Sabbath, which he had already done in this case, and both did and justified in other cases. (See below, on 3, 1-4.) It might more probably imply such scruples in the minds of the people, who would then be represented as deferring their request for healing till the close of the Sabbath, at the setting of the sun. Even this, however, is unnecessary, as the fact in question is sufficiently explained by two more obvious considerations: first, that the cool of the day would be better for the sick themselves, and secondly, that some time would be requisite to spread the news and bring the sick together. He first describes them in the general, as *all those having* (themselves) *ill*, or being in an evil condition. (Wielif, *at malaise*; Rhemish version, *ill at ease*.) This may either denote bodily disease, as distinguished from mental and spiritual maladies, or, still more probably, disease in general, of which the most distressing form is separately specified. *Possessed with devils*, literally *demonized*, or under the control of demons, producing by their personal presence either bodily disease or mental alienation, or the two together. (See above, on vs. 23-27.)

33. And all the city was gathered together at the door.

The effect of such extraordinary cures, as might have been expected, was to rouse and gather the entire population of Capernaum, a statement which need scarcely be explained as hyperbolical, but may be strictly understood as meaning that every individual inhabitant, who could do so, attended at the door (*Wiclit. gate*) of Simon's house, to obtain healing for themselves or for their friends, or at least to see and hear the new religious teacher, whose instructions were attested by such clear proofs of superhuman power and authority.

34. And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.

But how did Christ respond to these importunate demands for supernatural relief? By healing *many*, which does not necessarily or probably imply that some were left unhealed, but rather that he healed them all (Matt. 8, 16), and that those whom he thus healed were many. The cures are classified as the diseases were in v. 32: *he healed many having (themselves) ill with various diseases, and expelled (or cast out) many demons.* Here again the first phrase may be generic, and include the second, as the demoniacal possessions were undoubtedly diseases, but of a preternatural description; or the two may be co-ordinate, describing two great forms of suffering, that arising from mere bodily disease, and that occasioned by the personal agency of evil spirits. In relation to these last, and in allusion to the fact recorded in vs. 24, 25, we are informed that though they recognized our Lord as the Messiah, and were ready to acknowledge him as such, he would not suffer them to do it; either because he did not need their testimony and would have been dishonoured by it, or because a premature annunciation of his Messianic claims would have defeated the whole purpose of his mission.

35. And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

In the midst of this unbounded popularity, arising from substantial benefits bestowed and clear proofs of divine legation, Christ himself not only avoids all undue publicity, but spends much time in private devotion. *Very early, while it was still night*, is not at variance with Luke's phrase, *it becoming day* (ch. 4, 42), since both are popular expressions for a point of time not certainly defined, to wit, the dawn or break of day, when light and darkness are in conflict, and although the day is breaking, it is really still night. (See below, on 16, 2.) At this early hour we see him rising and going out, not only from the house but from the town, into a desert unfrequent spot, and there praying, thus affording the most convincing proof of the necessity of prayer to our spiritual life by using it himself, as a mysterious but real and efficient means, not only of conversing with the Father and the Spirit, but of securing their co-operation.

36. And Simon, and they that were with him, followed after him.

This indifference to popular applause, and this desire for spiritual exercises, were alike beyond the comprehension of his friends, even of those whom he had lately called to be his personal attendants and disciples. Simon Peter, in whose house he had no doubt been lodged, no sooner missed him in the morning than he set forth in pursuit of him, accompanied by others, who are not here further designated or described. *Those with him* may perhaps mean those belonging to his household, those residing with him, but more probably, those with him upon this occasion, those who came out with him to assist him. Upon either supposition, James and John were probably included, either as inmates of his house, or as fellow disciples, and possessing the same interest in the safety and honour of their common master. *They pursued him*, hunted him, in Greek a strong expression used by Xenophon to signify the close pursuit of an enemy in war. It here denotes an eager and determined following, perhaps with some implication of displeasure at the act which caused it, showing a false view both of their privilege and his prerogative.

37. And when they had found him, they said unto him, All (men) seek for thee.

*Having found him*, after some search and uncertainty, as this expression seems to imply, *they say to him (that) all are seeking thee*. This seems to be assigned as a sufficient reason why they followed him, and why he must return, implying that his movements must be governed by the will of the great multitude who waited for him, or rather, as we learn from Luke's account of this same matter (Luke 4, 42), who had followed or accompanied his friends, and now endeavoured to restrain him from proceeding further, thereby showing their own ignorance of the end for which he came, and of the work in which he was officially engaged.

38. And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also : for therefore came I forth.

Instead of reproving them directly for their officious interference, or asserting his own rights and independence of their will, he simply indicates the nature of the work before him, by proposing an itinerant visitation of the nearest towns, literally, *village-cities*, which may either mean small cities, or large villages, or towns in its strict genuine sense as comprehending both the city and the village. *Next*, literally, *held or holding* an idiomatic Greek expression for adjoining or adjacent. *Let us go*, literally, *let us lead*, i. e. lead off, lead the way, set out, perhaps implying that the work proposed was a new one, now to be begun, although the form here used (*ἄγωμεν*) is common in the

gospels to denote mere locomotion or departure. (See below, 14, 42 and compare Matt. 26, 46. John 11, 16. 14, 31.) These words were of course addressed to his disciples, not to the accompanying multitude. *That I may there too* (not merely in Capernaum) *preach* (proclaim, announce) the good news of the kingdom of God, as it is more fully expressed by Luke (4, 43.) *For to this (end), or for this (cause), I have come forth*, not from the house of Simon at this time, as some explain it, but from the Father, as it is explained by Luke (*because unto this have I been sent.*) The attempt to set the two accounts at variance, instead of letting them explain each other, must appear absurd to all who are familiar with the weighing and comparison of evidence in courts of justice.

39. And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

The plan thus proposed he carried into execution. He not only *preached* on this occasion, but *he was preaching*; this was his employment. *In* (literally, *into*, i. e. going for the purpose into) *their synagogues*, the plural pronoun having reference to the *towns* mentioned in the preceding verse, or more indefinitely to the people, to whom and among whom *he was preaching*. *Into all* (or *the whole of*) *Galilee*, the same construction as in the preceding clause, and here as there implying previous motion, going into every part of Galilee and preaching there. *All Galilee*, not only *the next towns*, to which his first proposal had respect, and in which it was originally carried out, but through all parts of the province he carried his divine instructions and the miracles by which they were attested.

40. And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

After this general description of Christ's ministry in Galilee, and of the circumstances under which it was begun, Mark records another miracle, performed during his first circuit or official journey, and remarkable because of the peculiar nature of the evil which occasioned it. *A leper*, one afflicted with the *leprosy*, a painful and loathsome cutaneous disorder, which, although a natural disease, appears to have prevailed in a preternatural degree among the ancient Hebrews, so that heathen writers represent it as a national affection, and the cause of their expulsion from Egypt. The identity of this disease with any now known has been much disputed; but the latest testimonies favour the belief that it continues to prevail, and in an aggravated form, defying all attempts to cure it, even by the most improved and scientific modern methods. But even if the same disease, we have every reason to believe that it prevailed of old far more extensively, and in a more terrific shape than it ever does at present. The design of this

extraordinary prevalence, if real, was to furnish a symbol of the loath-someness of sin, considered as a spiritual malady, and by the rites connected with its treatment, to suggest the only means of moral renovation. The rules of procedure in such cases form a prominent part of the Mosaic law (Lev. xiii. xiv.), and were still in full force at the time of Christ's appearance. Besides the formal periodical inspection of the patient by the priest, and the purifying ceremonies incident even to a state of convalescence, the leper was excluded from society, required to dwell apart, and to announce his presence and condition by his dress, his gestures, and his words. That this law was applied without respect of persons, is apparent from the case of King Uzziah, who was smitten with the leprosy to punish his invasion of the priestly office, and though one of the most able and successful of the kings of Judah, spent the remainder of his life in a several (or separate) house, the government being administered by his son, as Prince Regent (2 Kings 15, 5. 2 Chr. 26, 16-21.) The lepers, therefore, were a well-defined and well-known class of sufferers, distinguished from all others by the circumstances which have just been stated, and holding a sort of middle place between demoniacal possessions and mere ordinary ailments. There was no doubt much curiosity in reference to the course which our Saviour would pursue with respect to these unfortunates, who were not considered as entitled even to approach him. This may be the reason that Mark relates the healing of a leper as his next example of the Saviour's miracles (40-45.) *There comes to him*, while thus engaged in visiting the towns of Galilee. *Kneeling to him*, not as an act of worship, but as a mark of importunity, a natural gesture of entreaty. This implies near approach, if not immediate contact, in direct violation of the Jewish usage. The beautiful expression in the last clause is expressive of the strongest faith in Christ's miraculous power, and only a reasonable doubt of his willingness to exercise it upon such an object. To us it seems a matter of course that he should cleanse the lepers as well as heal the sick; but it was in fact a very doubtful question till determined in the case before us. *Wilt* and *canst* are not mere auxiliaries but distinct and independent verbs, *if thou art willing thou art able*. To *cleanse* (or *purify*) me, i. e. to free me from the leprosy, considered not as a mere disease, but as a symbolical and actual defilement.

41. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth (his) hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.

Of the three evangelists by whom this miracle has been recorded, Mark alone describes our Saviour's feelings in performing it. The heart, though properly the name of a bodily organ, is used in all languages, perhaps, to signify the seat of the affections, and sometimes the affections themselves. But the Greeks extended this figurative usage to all the higher or thoracic viscera, the liver, lungs, &c., as distinguished from the lower or abdominal viscera, the former being also

reckoned edible, the latter not. For want of a distinctive term, the English version uses the word *bowels*, even where the Greek noun (*σπλάγχνα*) has its figurative sense of feeling, and especially compassion. From this sense of the noun, later and Hellenistic usage formed a verb (*σπλαγχνίζομαι*) unknown to the Greek classics, and denoting, first the yearning of the bowels, or rather the commotion of the upper viscera, and then the emotion of pity or compassion. It is the passive participle of this verb that is here correctly paraphrased, *moved with compassion*. Under the influence of human sympathy, as well as of divine condescension, he complies with the request of the poor leper, both by deed and word. The deed, that of stretching out the hand and touching him, had no magical intrinsic power, being frequently dispensed with; but it visibly connected the author with the subject of the miracle, and at the same time symbolized or typified the healing virtue which it did not of itself impart. The words which accompanied this gesture correspond to those of the leper himself, but with a point and brevity which make them still more beautiful and striking. If thou wilt, . . . . I will. Thou canst cleanse me, . . . . Be cleansed. The version, *be thou clean*, though perfectly correct in sense, mars the antithesis between the active and the passive voice of one and the same verb (*καθαρίσαται*, *καθαρίσθητι*.)

42. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

The effect, as usual, was instantaneous, and is so described by Mark's favourite adverb, *immediately*. The preceding words (*εἰπόντος αὐτοῦ*) are expunged as spurious by the later critics, and are only an amplification of the adverb. The strict sense of the aorist participle is, *having spoken*; but usage would justify the version *speaking*, i. e. while he yet spoke. The effect itself is described in two forms; first *the leprosy departed* (went away) *from him*, leaving him entirely free from its defilement and its pains; and thus, as a necessary consequence, *he was purified* (or *cleansed*), as he had asked and Christ had promised, both in a physical and moral sense. By being freed from the literal, corporeal foulness of this loathsome malady, the leper became ipso facto free from the social religious disabilities which the ceremonial law attached to it, and needed only to be recognized as thus free by the competent authority. (See below, on v. 44.)

43. And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away.

It is characteristic of the miracles of Christ that they were neither preceded nor followed by unnecessary words or acts, but as soon as the desired change was wrought, the subject was dismissed to make way for another. We have seen Peter's mother-in-law instantly returning to her household duties without any interval of convalescence. (See above, on v. 31.) So here, the leper is no sooner cleansed than he

is sent away, dismissed, or as the Greek word properly denotes, *cast out*, but used to express not a forcible expulsion (see above, v. 12), but a prompt and peremptory dismissal, the reason of which afterwards appears (see below, on v. 44.) The act of sending him away was accompanied in this case by an earnest charge or exhortation. The Greek word (*ἐμβριψάμενος*) is a Hellenistic form denoting strong emotion, and particularly grief or indignation. (See below, on 14, 5, and compare John 11, 33–38.) Here and in Matt. 9, 30, it can only mean a threatening in case of disobedience, charging him on pain of his severe displeasure and disapprobation.

44. And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

From the tone or spirit of the charge he passes to its subject-matter or contents. *See*, i. e. see to it, be careful, be upon thy guard. *Say nothing to any man*, literally, *to no one*, the double negative enhancing the negation in Greek, instead of cancelling it as in Latin and English. *Man*, supplied in such cases by the English version limits the sense too much, unless explained as an indefinite pronoun, like the same form in German. The charge here given was not one of absolute and permanent concealment, which was not only needless but impossible, from the sudden and complete change in the man's appearance and the subsequent effect upon his social relations. The prohibition was a relative and temporary one, and had respect to the more positive command which follows. Until that direction was complied with, he was to say nothing. This connection is suggested by the order of the sentence, “see thou tell no one . . . but go,” &c., i. e. remain silent till thou hast gone. This was no doubt intended to secure his prompt performance of a duty which he might otherwise have postponed or omitted altogether. This was the duty of subjecting himself to the inspection of a priest, and obtaining his official recognition of the cure which had been wrought upon him. That recognition would of course be followed by the offerings prescribed in the Mosaic law for such occasions. (Lev. 14, 1–32.) By this requisition Christ not only provided for the full authentication of the miracle, but as it were, defined his own relation to the ceremonial law, as a divine institution, and as being still in force. This was important, both as a preventive of malicious charges, and as a key to the design of his whole ministry or mission, which belonged, at least in form, to the old and not the new economy, and was only preparatory to the outward change of dispensations. This is the meaning put by some upon the last words *for a testimony* (Tyndale *testimonial*) *to them*, i. e. as a proof that I reverence the law and comply with its requirements. More probably, however, it refers to the fact of the man's being cleansed, which could be fully ascertained by nothing but official scrutiny and attestation.

45. But he went out, and began to publish (it) much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places : and they came to him from every quarter.

While Matthew's narrative concludes with Christ's command, Mark goes on to tell how it was obeyed, or rather disobeyed in one point, namely, the suppression of the fact until attested by the priest. Instead of attending to this first, as he had been directed, *going out* (from the house or from the presence of the Saviour), *he began* (at once, and as his first employment) *to proclaim many (things)*, i. e. to say much in the way of heralding his cure, *and to report* (circulate, or publish) *the word*, not the thing or matter, a meaning now rejected by the best philologists, but the story or report of it. Some understand it still more strictly, of the word by which the miracle was wrought (*καθαρίσθητι*) *be cleansed!* The singular translation *blazed abroad*, is borrowed from the Rhemish version. Whether the cleansed leper went to the priests at all is not recorded, being a matter of small historical importance in comparison with the effect of his disobedience on our Lord's own movements, for the sake of which it is inserted in the narrative. This effect was to prevent his coming *into town* (i. e. any town, not *the town*, i. e. Capernaum), at least publicly and openly. *He could not*, i. e. in a moral sense, without defeating his own purpose by exciting tumult in the towns through which he passed, and where the premature announcement of his miracles had predisposed the people to undue excitement. To avoid this risk he now chose for his stations unfrequented places, such as John had occupied, but not for the same reason. This change of place, however, did not abate his popularity, for crowds came to him in the desert from all quarters. It may here be observed, that although the prohibition to divulge the miracle appears in this case to have been conditional and for a time, it was repeated afterwards more absolutely (see below, on 5, 43. 7, 36), not in conformity to any fixed rule, but for the general purpose of preventing the precipitate occurrence of events which according to his plan were to be gradually brought about. Hence we find him varying his practice as the circumstances of the cases varied with the same independent and original authority which marked his public teaching. (See above, on v. 27.)



## CHAPTER II.

Thus far the historian has been tracing the progress of Christ's ministry, from its antecedents and preliminaries to a height of popularity and influence requiring the enthusiasm of the masses to be checked rather than excited. But this success, though general, was still not

universal. Upon certain classes of the people the impression made was altogether different. To trace the growth of this unfriendly feeling till it ripened into bitter hatred and avowed hostility, is one great object of the history which now presents this dark side of the picture, and exhibits the original causes, or at least the earliest displays of disaffection, with the very words and actions which occasioned them. The form which the narrative assumes is that of a series of charges against Jesus, or objections to the course which he pursued, as inconsistent with the law of Moses. The first ground of objection was his claiming the power to forgive sins, while performing a miracle of healing on a paralytic at Capernaum (1-12.) The next was his intercourse with publicans and sinners, connected historically with the call of a publican to be an apostle (13-17.) A third was his free mode of living, and supposed neglect of all ascetic duties (18-22.) A fourth was his alleged violation of the Sabbath, of which one case is here recorded (23-28), and another in the following chapter (1-6.) The natural relation of these topics to what goes before, their mutual connection and their common bearing on the whole course of the history, are clear proofs of its unity, coherence, and methodical structure.

1. And again he entered into Capernaum, after (some) days ; and it was noised that he was in the house.

From among our Saviour's many miracles of healing (see above, on 1, 34), Mark now selects another, for a special purpose, that of pointing out the first display of hostile feeling on the part of certain classes, the occasion of which was afforded by the miracle in question. We have two other narratives of this transaction (Matt. 9, 2-8. Luke 5, 17-26), neither of which is so minute and graphic as the one before us, that of Matthew being much the most concise and meagre. The different connections in which the gospels introduce this narrative have reference to their several designs in giving it. That of Mark, already stated, makes the mere chronology of slight importance. His opening words show, however, that the incident took place after Christ's first missionary circuit, recorded in the former chapter (1, 39.) *He came again into Capernaum*, as his head-quarters, or the centre of his operations (see above, on 1, 21), to which he constantly returned from his itinerant labours throughout Galilee. *After some days*, the nearest equivalent in English to an idiomatic Greek phrase, strictly meaning, *through days*, i. e. after more than one day had elapsed. *Noised*, literally, *heard*, implying that it must have been reported, and suggesting the deep interest now felt in all his movements by his townsmen and neighbours. *In the house*, another idiomatic phrase, which strictly means *to* (or *in-to*) *house*, and like the corresponding German form (*zu Hause*) is equivalent in sense to our *at home*, but with the accessory notion of previous arrival or return, suggested by the preposition (*eis*.) 'It was heard that he had come home and was now there.' The idea of his own or any other particular house, although implied, is not expressed in the original. The two oldest English versions have *in a house*.

2. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive (them), no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

The public curiosity, so far from being weakened by his absence, was now more intense than ever, so that the house was filled at once to overflowing. *Immediately*, Mark's favourite connective (see above, on 1, 10. 18. 20. 21. 29. 31. 42. 43), but not on that account unmeaning or inaccurate. His peculiarity is not that he describes things as immediate which were not so, but that he observes the immediate succession of events, where others do not mention it. *So as no longer to receive (or hold them), not even the (place) at the door, or, so that not even the (parts) next the door could hold (them, or make room for them.)* The Greek verb has the same sense as in John 2, 6. 21, 25. Even the porch or entry, leading from the street to the interior of an oriental house, was crowded. Before this multitude he exercised, as usual, the two great functions of his ministry, teaching and healing. *Preached*, (literally, *spoke or talked*) *the word*, i. e. what he had to say of himself and of his kingdom, or, as Luke expresses it (5, 17), *was teaching*.

3. And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

It would seem, from an expression used by Luke (5, 17), that other miracles of healing were performed at this time, but that one is recorded in detail, on account of the discourse to which it gave occasion. *They came, indefinitely, there came (men) to him, bringing a paralytic*, a word now in common use, but not at the date of our translation, which employs the circumlocution, *sick of the palsy*, an abbreviation or corruption of *paralysis*. Mark omits the mention of the bed in this place, but adds the circumstance that four men carried him.

4. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken (it) up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

Their eagerness to reach Christ, and their faith in his capacity to heal, were shown by their extraordinary method of effecting an entrance. *Not being able to approach him for (or on account of) the crowd*, which filled the very doorway, as already mentioned (in v. 2), *they unroofed the roof* (in Greek a kindred verb and noun) *where he was*, i. e. either in the open court around which an eastern house is always built, or in the upper room, which is commonly the largest, and the one used for numerous assemblies. (Compare Acts I, 13. 9, 39. 20, 8.) On the former supposition, some explain the unroofing to be simply the removal of the rampart or bulwark, which the law of Moses, and the usage

of the east, require on every flat roof as a safeguard against accidents. (See Deut. 22, 8.) But this would hardly be described as unroofing, and is still more inconsistent with the phrase employed by Luke (*through the tiles*.) *Digging out*, i. e. removing the loose tiles or plates of burnt clay which covered the surface of the roof, or still more probably, digging through the earth or plaster which composed the roof itself. *They let down*, lower, i. e. with cords or ropes, which, although not expressed, is necessarily suggested by the usage of the Greek verb (see Luke 5, 4. 5. Acts 9, 25. 27, 17. 30. 2 Cor. 11, 33.) *The couch* (or *pallet*), not the common word for *bed*, here used by Luke (5, 18) and Matthew (9, 2), but one of Macedonian origin, found only in the later Greek, and probably denoting a couch easily carried, perhaps a camp-bed. Even the most costly oriental beds consist of cushions and light coverings, spread upon the floor or divan, bedsteads being quite unknown. *On which the paralytic was lying*, helpless, and therefore passive, though no doubt consenting to this bold and energetic movement of his friends, who thus succeeded in depositing him in the midst of the crowd below, and immediately before the Saviour (Luke 5, 19.)

5. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

*Seeing*, both from their external acts and by his power of discerning spirits. *Their faith*, that of his companions, who would not have gone so far in their endeavour to reach Jesus if they had not believed in his capacity and willingness to do what they desired. The commendation of their faith is not addressed directly to themselves, but indirectly to their suffering friend, and in a form at once affecting and surprising. *Son*, or rather *child*, the Greek word being neuter, and in usage common to both sexes, even when the reference is to one, as here, and in Matt. 21, 28. Luke 2, 48. 15, 31. The same affectionate address is used by Christ to his disciples in the plural number (Matt. 10, 24. John 13, 33), and a synonymous form elsewhere (John 21, 5.) It is here intended to express, not only kindness and compassion, but a new spiritual kindred or relation, which had just been formed between the speaker and the man whom he addressed. *Be forgiven*, like the Greek verb, is ambiguous, and may be either a command or an affirmation. It is now held by the highest philological authorities that the original word (*ἀφέωνται*) is an Attic, or more probably a Doric form of the perfect passive, signifying something that is done already. *Thy sins have (already) been remitted*, the verb corresponding to the noun (*remission*) in 1, 4, above. There is no need of supposing, as some do, that this man's palsy was in some peculiar or unusual sense the fruit of sinful indulgence; much less that our Lord conformed his language to the common Jewish notion, that all suffering was directly caused by some specific sin, a notion which he pointedly condemns in John 9, 3. Luke 13, 2-5. Bodily and spiritual healing was more frequently coincident than we are apt to think, the one being really a pledge and symbol of the other. Saving faith and healing faith, to use an analogous expression, were

alike the gift of God, and often, if not commonly, bestowed together, as in this case, where the singularity is not the coincidence of healing and forgiveness, but the prominence given to the latter by the Saviour, who instead of saying, ‘be thou whole’ (compare 1, 41), or ‘thy disease is healed,’ surprised all who heard him by the declaration that his sins were pardoned. This paradoxical expression was no doubt designed to turn attention from the lower to the higher cure or miracle, and also to assert his own prerogative of pardon, in the very face of those whom he knew to be his enemies.

6. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

We here see for whom this unexpected declaration was intended, not for his friends and disciples, but for others whom he knew to be present as spies and censors of his conduct. *There were some of the scribes*, i. e. of the large class or profession mentioned in 1, 22, and there explained. These expounders of the law, and spiritual leaders of the people, had already been invidiously compared with Jesus by the crowds who heard him, and were therefore predisposed to regard him as a rival. Those who assembled now on his return to Capernaum were not merely residents of that place, but collected, as Luke strongly phrases it (5, 17), from every village of Galilee and Judea, as well as from Jerusalem. However hyperbolical these terms may be, the essential fact is still that these unfriendly scribes came from various quarters, thereby showing the importance which began to be attached to Christ’s proceedings, especially by those who were at once the jurists and the theologians, the lawyers and the clergy, of the Jewish nation. *Sitting* seems to imply that they were in a convenient and conspicuous position, and perhaps that they had come betimes in order to secure it (see below, on 12, 39.) *Reasoning*, or as the Greek word primarily means, reckoning, calculating, through and through, a term implying coolness and deliberate forethought, not a sudden violent excitement. It might here denote discussion, or an interchange of views among themselves (as in 9, 33. 34, below); but this idea is excluded by the added words, *in their hearts*, so that what is here described is not reciprocal communication, but the secret working of their several minds, unconscious of the eye that was upon them.

7. Why doth this (man) thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?

The *reasoning* mentioned in the sixth verse had no doubt been going on from the beginning of our Lord’s discourse; but the evangelist confines himself to the effect of his surprising declaration to the paralytic, that his sins were pardoned. *This and thus* are commonly supposed to be contemptuous, at least the former, which in classic Greek is often really equivalent to *this fellow*, and is sometimes so translated in our Bible. (Matt. 12, 24. 26, 61. 71. Luke 22, 59. 23, 2. John 9

29. Acts 18, 13.) *Thus*, not merely, as we have just heard him, but so foolishly and wickedly. *Blasphemy*, in classic Greek, is any evil speaking, even against man, such as slander or vituperation; but in Hellenistic usage, it denotes specifically evil-speaking against God, or any thing said impiously either of or to him. The plural (*blasphemies*), which Luke has also (5, 21), is probably intensive (all this blasphemy), but may have more specific reference to different expressions which our Lord had used, and which they reckoned blasphemous. (See below, on 3, 28, and compare Matt. 15, 19. 1 Tim. 6, 4. Rev. 13, 5.) Only one, however, is expressly cited or referred to, namely, that at the conclusion of the fifth verse. *Who is able to remit sins except one (that is) God?* The principle involved in this interrogation is a sound one, and appears to have been a sort of axiom with these learned Jewish scribes, who were also right in understanding Christ as acting by his own authority, and thereby claiming divine honours for himself. A mere declaratory absolute they could utter too, and no doubt often did so, but the very manner of our Lord must have evinced that in forgiving, as in teaching, he spoke with authority, and not as the scribes. (See above, on 1, 22.)

8. And immediately, when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

These cavils and repinings, though not audible, were visible to him who had occasioned them. *Immediately*, here too (see above, on v. 2) is not an expletive, but indicates the instantaneous detection of their thoughts by his omniscience, without waiting till they were betrayed by word or action. *Perceived*, literally, *knowing*, a verb meaning sometimes to recognize or know again (see below, 6, 33. 54), and sometimes to ascertain or discover (see below, 5, 30), but more commonly to know certainly or thoroughly (see Luke 1, 1), which is probably the meaning here, the intensive compound having reference to our Lord's immediate and infallible intuition of their very thoughts. *In his spirit*, may have reference either to his divine or to his human nature. In the former case, it simply means, in the exercise of his divine cognition (1 Cor. 2, 11); in the latter, through that spiritual influence and illumination, with which, as the Messiah, he was constantly invested. (See above, on 1, 10. 12.) To our apprehensions the two meanings are the same, the distinction being one beyond the reach of our conceptions. His question corresponds in form to theirs, as if he had said, 'I may rather ask why you weigh or reckon these things in your hearts,' not merely in their minds, but in their inner parts, or secretly. The fault was not in him, but in themselves, who thus presumed to sit in judgment on him. The interrogation has the same force in both cases, namely, that of implied censure. 'What right has this man to pronounce such words?' 'What right have you to entertain such thoughts?'

9. Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, (Thy) sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

This is one of the most striking instances on record of our Lord's consummate wisdom in the use of what appears to be a strange and paradoxical method of reasoning or instruction. As instead of pronouncing the man healed he unexpectedly pronounced him pardoned, so, instead of meeting their objections by a formal affirmation of his own prerogative, he does so by a subtle but convincing argument, disclosing at the same time why he had so spoken. They denied his power to forgive sins, and could not be convinced of it by any sensible demonstration. But they might equally dispute his power to heal, unless attested by a visible effect. If then his commanding the paralytic to arise and walk should be followed by his doing so, what pretext could they have for doubting his assertion that the same man's sins were pardoned? *Which* (in old English *whether*) *is easier?* You may think it easy enough to pronounce his sins forgiven, whether they be so or not; but it is equally easy to pronounce him healed, or to demand of him the actions of a sound man, and if this should prove effectual, you must acknowledge that the other is so too, although forgiveness cannot be made palpable to sense like the cure of a paralysis.

10. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

'That you may know by what authority I tell this man that his sins have been forgiven, I will show you what authority I have over his disease, that the possession of the one may demonstrate the existence of the other, for both belong to me as the Messiah.' *Son of man* cannot simply mean *a man*, or a mere man, for this would be untrue in fact, since the powers in question do not belong to men as such; nor could any reason be assigned for this circuitous expression of so simple an idea. The sense of *man by way of eminence*, the model man, the type and representative of human nature in its unfallen or restored condition, is by no means obvious or according to the analogy of Scripture, and at most an incidental secondary notion. The true sense is determined by Dan. 7, 13, where the phrase is confessedly applied to the Messiah, as a partaker of our nature, a description which itself implies a higher nature, or in other words, that he is called the Son of Man because he is the Son of God. This official application of the term accounts for the remarkable and interesting fact, that it is never used of any other person in the gospels, nor of Christ by any but himself. Even Acts 7, 56 is scarcely an exception, since the words of Stephen are a dying reminiscence of the words of Jesus, and equivalent to saying, 'I behold him who was wont to call himself the Son of Man.' This exclusive use of the expression by our Lord may be accounted for by the consideration that it is not in itself a title

of honour, but of humiliation, and could not therefore be employed without irreverence by any but himself, while he was upon earth, or in a state of voluntary humiliation.

11. I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

Having stated his argument, he now applies it, by exhibiting the very proof of his authority to pardon sin which he had shown to be conclusive. To forgive sin and to heal disease are superhuman powers, to claim which is equally easy, and to exercise them equally difficult. If I pronounce this man forgiven, you may deny it, but you cannot bring my declaration to the test of observation, since forgiveness is a change not cognizable by the senses. But if I assert the other power, you can instantly detect the falsehood of my claim, by showing that the paralysis continues. If, on the contrary, it disappears at my command, the proof thus furnished of the truth of one claim may convince you that the other is no less well founded. Thus far he had addressed the scribes; then turning to the palsied man, *To thee I say, Arise, take up thy couch and go away into thy house.*

12. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

Familiar as we are with this astounding scene, it is not easy to imagine the solicitous suspense with which both the enemies and friends of Jesus must have awaited the result. Had the paralytic failed to obey the summons, the pretensions of the new religious teacher were refuted by the test of his own choosing. But *he rose* (or more exactly, *was aroused or raised up*), not by slow degrees, but *immediately* (see v. 8), without delay, and *lifting the pallet*, upon which he had been lying, *he went out* of the house and from amidst the crowd through which he had a little before been so strangely introduced, and that not secretly but openly, *before all*, as if challenging inspection. The result, as might have been expected, was that *they were all amazed*, or in an *ecstasy*, i. e. an abnormal or extraordinary state of mind, in English commonly applied to extreme joy, in Greek to extreme wonder. (See below, on 3, 21. 5, 42. 6, 51.) But the wonder was not irreligious, for it prompted them to *glorify God*, i. e. to praise him as the God of glory, whose presence had been manifested in a way, of which they had experienced no previous example.

13. And he went forth again by the sea-side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

The supposed extravagance of Christ's pretensions was aggravated, in the eyes of his accusers, by a seeming inconsistency of his behaviour

with respect to friendships and associations. While he claimed an authority above that of any prophet, he consorted with the most notorious violators of the law, who were excluded by all strict Jews from their social and ecclesiastical communion. He did so even with the publicans, whose very name was a proverbial expression for the want of character and standing in society. This excommunication of a whole class or profession arose from the singular political condition of the Jews at this time. The Romans, to whom they had been virtually subject since the occupation of Jerusalem by Pompey, and particularly since the coronation of Herod as king of the Jews by order of the senate, with their usual wise policy, suffered them in most things to govern themselves. The two points in which their domination was most sensible were the military occupation of the country and the oppressive system of taxation. This branch of the imperial revenue was farmed out to certain Roman knights, and by them to several gradations of subordinate collectors, each of whom was required to pay a stated sum to his superior, but with the privilege of raising as much more as he could for his own benefit. This financial system, which still exists in some oriental countries, must from its very nature be oppressive, by offering a premium for extortion and rapacity. To this was added in the case before us the additional reproach of being instruments and tools, not merely of a foreign despotism, but of a gentile or heathen power. The odium thus attached to the office of a publican, or Roman tax-gatherer, prevented any Jews from holding it except those of the most equivocal and reckless character, who, being thus excluded, by their very occupation, from respectable society, were naturally thrown into that of wicked and disreputable men. Thus a business, not unlawful in itself, and only made oppressive by the cupidity of those engaged in it, came by degrees to be regarded by devout Jews as intrinsically evil, and gave rise to that familiar but without reference to these facts unintelligible combination, "publicans and sinners." There was no slight analogy between this moral degradation and the physical debasement of the leper; and the same curiosity may have been felt as to the way in which our Lord would treat it. Mark accordingly exhibits, as a second ground of opposition to his ministry, the fact that he not only companied with publicans, but caused that hated and despised profession to be represented in the college of apostles (13-17.) As the first four of his personal attendants were fishermen, so the fifth, whose vocation is recorded, was selected from among the publicans, and called from the actual discharge of his official functions. The three evangelists, by whom this interesting incident has been preserved, agree in making it directly follow the miraculous cure of the paralytic. Mark adds particularly that it took place on his *going out again* (i. e. probably from Capernaum), with reference to his *going in again*, at the beginning of this chapter, and while he was engaged in the instruction of the crowd which still attended him.

14. And as he passed by, he saw Levi the (son) of Al-

pheus, sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

*Passing by or along*, from the city to the lake, or on the shore of the latter, he saw a person acting as a publican. *Receipt of custom*, or, as most interpreters explain the term, the place of such receipt, not necessarily a house, perhaps a temporary office or a mere shed, such as Wiclif calls a tolboth (*toll-booth*), a name transferred in Scotland to the common gaol. At this place, perhaps upon the waterside, he saw a person sitting and engaged in his official duties, whom he called to follow him, a call which he instantly obeyed, abandoning his former business (Luke 5, 28.) It is not affirmed, or even necessarily implied, that this was his first knowledge of the Saviour. The analogy of the calls before described (1, 16-20) makes it not improbable that this man, like his predecessors, had already heard him, and perhaps received an intimation that his services would be required. It can scarcely be fortuitous in all these cases that the persons called, though previously acquainted with the Saviour, had returned to or continued in their former occupation, and were finally summoned to attend their Master while engaged in the performance of its duties. The person here called Luke names *Levi*, Mark more fully, *Levi, son of Alpheus*. In the several lists of the apostles, one is expressly so described, namely, James the Less, and one by an almost necessary implication, namely, Jude or Judas, not Iscariot (see below, on 3, 18, and compare Matt. 10, 3. Luke 6, 5. 16. Acts 1, 13.) In none of these four catalogues is the name of *Levi* found, but in one of them (Matt. 10, 3), a publican is mentioned by the name of *Matthew*, the very name which an old and uniform tradition has connected with that gospel as its author. The combination of these statements, which some German writers in their ignorance of practical and public jurisprudence, represent as contradictory, no judge or jury in America or England would hesitate or scruple to regard as proving that the Matthew of one gospel and the Levi of the other two are one and the same person. The same diversity exists in relation to the hypothesis or theory, by which the difference of name may be accounted for. While one class treats it as a mere harmonical device without intrinsic probability, the other thinks it altogether natural and in accordance with analogy, that this man, like so many persons in the sacred history, Paul, Peter, Mark, &c., had a double name, one of which superseded the other after his conversion. In this case it was natural that Matthew himself should use the name by which he had so long been known as an apostle, yet without concealing his original employment, and that Mark and Luke should use the name by which he had been known before, when they relate his conversion, but in enumerating the apostles should exchange it for his apostolic title. This hypothesis is certainly more probable than that of a mistake on either side, or that of a confusion between two conversions, those of Levi and Matthew, both of whom were publicans, and one of whom was an apostle, but confounded by tradition with the other!

15. And it came to pass, that as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples ; for there were many, and they followed him.

*Sat at meat*, literally, *lay down or reclined*. a luxurious posture introduced among the later Greeks and Romans from the east. Among the ancient Greeks as well as Hebrews sitting was the universal posture, as it still continued to be in the case of women and children, while the men, by whom alone convivial entertainments were attended, leaned on their elbows stretched on beds or couches. This was also the fashion of the Jews, when our Saviour was among them, and the use of the words *sat*, *sat down*, *sat at meat*, in all such cases, is a mere accommodation to our modern usage, the very same verbs being rendered *lay* or *lying* when the reference is to sickness (see above, on v. 4, and on 1, 30, and below, on 5, 40), and in one instance *leaning*, where the true sense is the common one of lying or reclining (John 13, 23.) *In his house* might be either that of Jesus or of Matthew, whose own expression is still more indefinite (*in the house*) ; but the ambiguity is solved by Luke (5, 29), who tells us that the publican apostle made a great reception ( $\delta\sigma\chi\eta\nu$ ) for him in his house, a circumstance modestly omitted in his own account of these transactions. We have then a double reason for the fact that many publicans and sinners sat (reclined) at meat with Christ and his disciples ; first, the one expressed by Mark, that this unhappy class was very numerous, and very generally followed Christ, to hear his doctrine and experience his kindness ; and then, the one implied by Luke, that he who gave this entertainment was himself a publican, and therefore likely to invite or to admit his own associates in office and in disrepute.

16. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners ?

The unavoidable publicity of almost all our Saviour's movements, and the agitated state of public feeling with respect to him, would necessarily prevent a private and select assemblage even in a private house. It is only by neglecting this peculiar state of things that any difficulty can be felt as to the presence of censorious enemies at Matthew's table or within his hospitable doors, if not as guests, as spectators or as spies. These unwelcome visitors are designated by the same name as before (v. 6), that of *Scribes*, but also by another, that of *Pharisees*, here applied to the same persons, but describing them in a different manner. The word itself means *separatists*, and is commonly explained as a description of their austere and ascetic separation from the mass, as claiming a superior sanctity and purity of morals. It is far more probable, however, that the name has reference to national, not to personal seclusion, and describes the party which contended for the separation of the chosen people as its highest honour,

and insisted upon every point of difference between them and the Gentiles, while the rival party of the Sadducees inclined to a more liberal assimilation to the customs of the Gentiles. The word *sect*, commonly applied to these two bodies, conveys the false idea of a separate organization, creed, and worship, whereas they were only two divisions of the same church and body politic, and might be more correctly called schools or parties. The Pharisees appear to have included the great body of the people, or at least to have controlled them, not so much by laying claim to a higher moral and religious character, as by their patriotic zeal for national distinctions. This, which was at first a laudable and proper spirit, had become punctilious in its love of forms, preferring what was merely ceremonial, or of minor moment, to the weightier matters of the law, and often cloaking great corruption under appearances of virtue and devotion. Of these Pharisees the scribes were the official or professional leaders, and the names are therefore sometimes interchanged, and still more frequently combined as here. Nothing could be more at variance with their hollow ceremonial sanctity than Christ's association with these excommunicated sinners and apostates, and especially his free participation in their food, on which the Jews of that age especially insisted as a means and mark of separation from the Gentiles (Acts 10, 28), and from those among themselves whom they regarded as mere heathen (Matt. 18, 17.) Unprepared as yet to make an open opposition to the Saviour, and perhaps awed by his presence, they present their complaint in the indirect form of an interrogation addressed not to him but his disciples. To *eat* in the first clause, and to *eat and drink* in the second, are equivalent expressions, both conveying the same general ideas of food and of participation in it.

17. When Jesus heard (it), he saith unto them, They that are whole, have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

Though addressed to the disciples, the objection is replied to by our Lord himself, and as usual in an unexpected form, presenting the true question at issue, and suggesting the true principle or method of solution. Their reproach implied a false view of his whole work and mission, which was that of a physician; the disease was sin; the more sinful any man or class of men were, the more were they in need of his attentions. The very idea of a healer or physician presupposes sickness; they that are whole (or well, in good health) need no such assistance. The figurative description of his work is followed by a literal one. The oldest manuscripts and latest critics read, *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.* This, taken by itself, would seem to mean simply that his errand was to sinners, that his message was addressed to them. But the parallel passage in Luke (5, 32), as well as the received text of Mark and Matthew (9, 13), adds the words, *to re-*

*penitance*, thus giving to the verb *call*, at least in reference to the last clause, the specific sense of summoning, inviting, or exhorting. Some interpreters suppose that this limitation of the meaning does not extend to the righteous, who are said to be called (or not called) in the vague sense above given—‘I came not to address the righteous, but to summon sinners to repentance.’ There is something very harsh, however, in supposing the same verb to have two senses in one sentence without being even repeated. A far more natural construction is to give it the same sense in relation to both classes, or in other words, to let the additional phrase (*to repentance*) qualify the whole clause. ‘I came not to call the righteous to repentance, but sinners.’ To this it is objected that repentance is not predicateable of the righteous. This depends upon the meaning of the latter term. If it denote, as some allege, comparatively righteous, i. e. less atrociously or notoriously wicked; or, as others think, self-righteous, righteous in their own eyes; then the righteous need repentance and the call to repentance just as much as others. If it mean absolutely righteous, i. e. free from sin, which is the proper meaning, and the one here required by the antithesis with sinners, it is true that such cannot repent, and need not be exhorted to repentance; but this is the very thing affirmed according to the natural construction. ‘You reproach me for my intercourse with sinners, but my very mission is to call men to repentance, and repentance presupposes sin; I did not come to call the righteous to repentance, for they do not need it and cannot exercise it, but to call sinners as such to repentance.’ By confining *to repentance* to the second member of the clause, the very thing most pointedly affirmed is either left out or obscurely hinted. Another error as to this verse is the error of supposing that our Saviour recognizes the existence of a class of sinless or absolutely righteous men among those whom he found upon the earth at his first advent. But the distinction which he draws is not between two classes of men, but between two characters or conditions of the whole race. By *the righteous* and *sinners* he does not mean those men who are actually righteous, and those other men who are actually sinners, but mankind as righteous and mankind as sinners. ‘I came not to call men as unfallen sinless beings to repentance, which would be a contradiction, but as sinners, which they all are; and I therefore not only may but must associate with sinners, as the very objects of my mission; just as the physician cannot do his work without coming into contact with the sick, who are alone in need of healing.’ He does not mean of course that his errand was to Publicans (as sinners), not to Pharisees (as righteous), but simply that the worse the former were, the more completely did they fall within the scope of his benignant mission.

18. And the disciples of John, and of the Pharisees, used to fast: and they come, and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John, and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?

Near akin to the charge of undue condescension and familiar intercourse with sinners is that of a free and self-indulgent life, to the neglect of all ascetic mortifications. It is doubtful, and comparatively unimportant, whether this charge was made upon the same or a different occasion. It by no means follows from the consecution and connection of the narratives, even in Luke (5, 33) and Matthew (9, 14), that the account of Matthew's feast is there continued, while in Mark another instance of the same kind seems to be added without any reference to the date of its occurrence ; an arrangement perfectly consistent with the general practice of the evangelists, who adhere to the exact chronological order only when it is the most convenient, and there seems to be no reason for departing from it. In the case before us it is very possible, though not a necessary supposition, that the writer goes on to complete the series of objections to our Saviour's method of proceeding, all belonging doubtless to the early period of his ministry, though not perhaps immediately successive. *The disciples of John* are commonly regarded by interpreters and readers as worthy representatives of John himself, holding his doctrines and his relative position with respect to the Messiah. But this position was no longer tenable ; the ministry of John was essentially prospective and preparatory ; its very object was to bring men to Christ as the lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world (John 1, 29.) Had all John's followers imbibed his spirit and obeyed his precepts, they would all have become followers of Christ, as some did. But even while John was at liberty, and in despite of his remonstrances, some of his disciples cherished a contracted zeal for him as the competitor of Christ (John 3, 26), and afterwards became a new religious party, equally unfaithful to the principal and the forerunner. These are the *disciples of John* mentioned in the gospel, after his imprisonment and the consequent cessation of his public ministry. Of their numbers and organic state we have no information. From the passage now before us, where they are connected with the Pharisees, not only by the history but by themselves (Matt. 9, 14), it is probable that John's severe means of awakening the conscience and producing deep repentance were continued as a ceremonial form after the spirit had departed. A remnant of this school or party reappears in Acts 19, 1-7, and with a further but most natural corruption in one or more heretical phenomena of later history. The first clause of this verse is understood by some as meaning that they were so engaged at the date of these occurrences, perhaps in consequence of John's death. But the Pharisees could hardly be expected to unite in this observance, or in any other with the followers of John as such, except by a fortuitous coincidence, which would not have been so expressed. This difficulty is avoided, and the usage of the language better satisfied, by understanding this clause as the statement of a general custom, common to both schools or parties, and accounting for the fact of the joint application here recorded. The neglect complained of would be equally offensive to the followers of John and to the Pharisees, however they might differ as to more important matters. *They were fasting*, i. e. statedly, and as a matter of observance, not as an occasional auxiliary to devo-

tion, or a special means of spiritual discipline. *They come to him* seems naturally to embrace both antecedents, the disciples of John and the Pharisees, although it may possibly refer only to the former, who alone are named by Matthew (9, 14), while Luke (5, 33) does not specify the subject of the sentence, which some interpreters supply from v. 30 (*scribes and pharisees*) ; but the chronological connection of the passages, as we have seen, is altogether doubtful. On the whole, it is most probable that some of either class united in the question, which implies or rather asserts, that their practice was in this respect the same. *For what*, i. e. for what cause or reason? *Fast*, i. e. habitually, statedly, a further confirmation of the meaning put upon the first clause, as they could scarcely mean to ask why the disciples did not join in the particular fast which they were then observing. The only stated fast prescribed in the Mosaic law is that of the great day of atonement, in which were summed up all the expiatory ceremonies of the year (Lev. 16, 29-34.) But before the close of the Old Testament canon, we find traces of additional fasts added by the Jews themselves (Zech. 8, 19), and in the time of Christ an intimation by himself that the Pharisees observed two weekly fasts (Luke 18, 12.) The Jewish traditions, though of later date, confirm the general fact here stated. The fasts observed by John's disciples were either the traditional ones common to all other Jews, or formal repetitions of those used by John as temporary remedies, perhaps a servile imitation of his personal austerity and abstinence. We have no reason to believe, and it is highly improbable, indeed, that John himself established stated fasts, which would seem to be at variance with his intermediate position, as the last prophet of the old dispensation and the herald of the new, but commissioned neither to improve upon the one nor to anticipate the other. *But thy disciples fast not*, though a simple statement of a fact, derives from its connection a censorious character, as if they meant to say, how is this omission to be justified or reconciled with thy pretensions as a teacher sent from God? (John 3, 2) In this case they complain to him of his disciples, as in that before it they complain to them of him (v. 16), and in the first which Mark records merely condemn him in their hearts without giving oral expression to their censures (vs. 6-8.) This charge, though indirect and interrogative in form, may be regarded as confirming what we know from other quarters, and especially from Christ's own words below, that his life and that of his disciples were alike free from the opposite extremes of frivolous self-indulgence and austere moroseness.

19. And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

The reply to this charge is as unexpected and original in form as either of the others, and made still more striking by its being borrowed

from familiar customs of the age and country, namely, from its marriage ceremonies, and particularly from the practice of the bridegroom bringing home his bride accompanied by chosen friends of either sex, rejoicing over them and for them. These, in the oriental idiom, were styled children of the bridal chamber, i. e. specially belonging to it and connected with it, something more than mere guests or attendants at the wedding. The specific term *sons*, here used in all the gospels, designates the male attendants upon such occasions. *The bridegroom* is in Greek an adjective derived from *bride* and answering to *bridal*, *nuptial*. Used absolutely, it denotes *the bridal (man)*, or *bridesman*, called in English *bridegroom*, and differing from *husband* just as *bride* does from *wife*. There may be here a double allusion, first, to the favourite Old Testament figure of a conjugal relation between God and Israel (as in Ps. xlvi. Isai. liv. Jer. ii. Hos. iii.), and then to John the Baptist's beautiful description of the mutual relation between him and Christ as that of the bridegroom and the bridegroom's friend (John 3, 29.) The form of the question is highly idiomatic, being that used when a negative answer is expected. The nearest approach to it in English is a negative followed by a question,—‘they cannot—can they?’ The incapacity implied is not a physical but moral one. They cannot be expected, or required to fast; there is no reason why they should fast. The general principle involved or presupposed is that fasting is not a periodical or stated, but a special and occasional observance, growing out of a particular emergency. This doctrine underlies the whole defence of his disciples, which proceeds upon the supposition that a fast, to be acceptable and useful, must have a reason and occasion of its own, beyond a general propriety or usage. It is also assumed that fasting is not a mere *opus operatum*, but the cause and the effect of a particular condition, that of spiritual grief or sorrow (Matt. 9, 15.)

20. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

The duty of fasting being thus dependent upon circumstances, may and will become incumbent when those circumstances change, as they are certainly to change hereafter. The bridegroom is not always to be visibly present, and when he departs, the time of fasting will be come. To express this still more strongly, he is said to be removed or taken away, as if by violence. *Then*, at the time of this removal, as an immediate temporary cause of sorrow, not forever afterwards, which would be inconsistent with the principle already laid down, that the value of religious fasting is dependent on its being an occasional and not a stated duty. There is no foundation therefore for the doctrine of some Romish writers, who evade this argument against their stated fasts, by alleging that according to our Lord's own declaration, the church after his departure was to be a fasting church. But this would be equivalent to saying that the Saviour's exaltation would consign his people to perpetual sorrow. For he evidently speaks of grief and

fasting as inseparable, and in Matthew's narrative of his reply, the former term is substituted for the latter (Matt. 9, 15.) Even the plural form, *in those days*, has respect to the precise time of his departure, much more the singular, *in that day*, which the latest critics have adopted as the true text.

21. No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up, taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.

Although Mark has not yet recorded any of Christ's formal parables, he gives us in this passage several examples of his parabolical method of instruction, i. e. by illustration drawn from the analogies of real life. Having already employed some of the prevailing marriage customs to account for the neglect of all austerities by his disciples, he proceeds to enforce the general principle which he is laying down, by other analogies derived from the festivities of such occasions, and particularly from the dresses and the drinks which were considered indispensable at marriage feasts. The first parable, as it is expressly called by Luke (5, 36), is suggested by the homely but familiar art of patching, and consists in a description of the general practice of what everybody does, or rather of what no one does, in such a matter. This appeal to constant universal usage shows, that however we may understand the process here alluded to, it must have been entirely familiar and intelligible to the hearers. The essential undisputed points are that he represents it as an unheard of and absurd thing to combine an old and new dress, by sewing parts of one upon the other. The incongruity, thus stated by the other two evangelists (Matt. 9, 16. Luke 5, 36), is rendered much more clear by Mark's explanation of a new dress, as meaning one composed of *unfulled cloth*, and therefore utterly unfit for the kind of combination here alluded to. *Else*, literally, *if not*, which may seem to say the very opposite of what our Saviour really intends and the connection here demands, but which means, if he does not act upon this principle or adhere to this universal custom. Both the text and the construction of the next clause have been much disputed; but the true sense seems to be the one expressed in the common version, namely, that the new piece or filling up, by shrinking or by greater strength of fibre, loosens or weakens the old garment still more, and the rent becomes worse. The essential idea here expressed is evidently that of incongruity, with special reference to old and new. It admits of various applications to the old and new economy the old and new nature of the individual, and many other contrasts of condition and of character. The primary use of it, suggested by the context and historical occasion, was to teach the authors of this charge that they must not expect in the Messiah's kingdom a mere patching up of what had had its day and done its office, by empirical repairs and emendations of a later date, but an entire renovation of the church and of religion; not as to its essence or its vital principle, but as to all its outward forms and vehicles. As the usages immediately in question were of human not divine institution, whatever

there may be in this similitude of sarcasm or contempt, belongs not even to the temporary forms of the Mosaic dispensation, but to its traditional excrescences.

22. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles : else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred : but new wine must be put into new bottles.

The same essential truth is now propounded in another parabolic form, likewise borrowed from the experience of common life. Instead of old and new cloth, the antithesis is now between old and new skins as receptacles for new wine, the fermenting strength of which distends the fresh skins without injury, but bursts the rigid leather of the old ones. The word *bottles* is of course to be explained with reference to the oriental use of goat skins to preserve and carry water, milk, wine, and other liquids. The attempt to determine who are meant by the bottles, and what by the wine, proceeds upon a false assumption with respect to the structure and design of parables, which are not to be expounded by adjusting the minute points of resemblance first, and then deducing from the aggregate a general conclusion, but by first ascertaining the main analogy, and then adjusting the details to suit it. (See below, on 4, 2.) This is the method universally adopted in expounding fables, which are only a particular species of the parable, distinguished by the introduction of the lower animals, as representatives of moral agents. In explaining Æsop's fable of the Fox and the Grapes, no one ever thinks of putting a distinctive meaning on the grapes, as a particular kind of fruit, or on the limbs of the fox as having each its own significance. Yet this is the expository method almost universally applied to the parables. By varying the form of his illustration here, without a change in its essential import, he teaches us to ascertain the latter first, and then let the mere details adjust themselves accordingly. The last clause furnishes the key to both similitudes. *New wine must be put into new bottles.* In religion, no less than in secular affairs, new emergencies require new means to meet them ; but these new means are not to be devised by human wisdom, but appointed by divine authority.

23. And it came to pass, that he went through the corn-fields on the sabbath-day ; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.

A fourth charge or ground of opposition to the Saviour, on the part of the more scrupulous and rigid Jews, was his alleged violation of the Sabbath, either in person or by suffering his followers to do what was esteemed unlawful. This divine institution, as already mentioned (see above, on 1, 21), being chiefly negative in its observance, was less affected by a change of outward situation than the legal ceremonies, most of which were limited to one place, and could not be performed without

irregularity elsewhere. Hence the Jews in foreign lands, being cut off from the offering of sacrifices and the formal celebration of their yearly festivals, were chiefly distinguished from the Gentiles among whom they dwelt by two observances, those of circumcision and the Sabbath, and especially the latter, as the more notorious and palpable peculiarity of their religion. Hence the prophets who predict the exile, lay peculiar stress on the observance of the Sabbath, as the badge of a true Israelite. (Isa. 56, 2. 58, 13. Lam. 2, 6. Ezek. 44, 24. Hos. 2, 11.) After the restoration, when the same necessity no longer existed, the people were disposed to exaggerate this duty by gratuitous restrictions, and by pushing the idea of religious rest (which was the essence of the Sabbath) to an absurd extreme, at the same time losing sight of its spiritual purpose, and confining their attention to the outward act, or rather abstinence from action, as intrinsically holy and acceptable to God. One of the Jewish books enumerates thirty-nine acts, with many subdivisions, which were to be considered as unlawful labour, and the Talmud gives the most minute specifications of the distance which might be lawfully passed over, even in the greatest emergencies, as that of fire. With these distorted and corrupted notions of the Sabbath, they would soon find something to condemn in the less punctilious but more rational and even legal conduct of our Lord and his disciples. Two such attacks, with their historical occasions, are recorded here by Mark, the first of which fills the remainder of this chapter (vs. 23-28.) It is also given by Matthew (12, 1-8) and Luke (6, 1-5), by the former more and by the latter less minutely, and with some variation as to form and substance, but without the least real inconsistency. One of the points of difference is in the chronological arrangement, Matthew connecting what is here recorded with his previous context by the general formula, *in that time*, while Luke specifies the very Sabbath upon which it happened. As Mark has no indication of time whatever, it is clear that he is putting things together, not as immediately successive in the time of their occurrence, but as belonging to the same class or series, that of the objections made by the censorious Jews, on legal grounds, to Christ's proceedings. Hence this topic occupies an earlier place in Mark than in either of the other gospels, and when taken in connection with their marked agreement, even in minute forms of expression, proves that while they used the same material and aimed at the same ultimate design, each was directed to pursue his own plan independently of both the others. *It came to pass (or happened)*, although it decides nothing in reference to the time of the occurrence, appears rather to imply that it was different from that of the preceding topic. As if he had said, 'another incident, exhibiting the spirit of these censors, was as follows.' *Went*, literally *went by* or *a'long*, implying that he crossed the corn-field merely on his way to some place, and not wantonly or idly, much less for the purpose of provoking this objection. *Cornfields*, literally *sown (fields)*, i. e. sown with corn, in the proper English sense of grain or bread-stuffs, with particular reference to wheat and barley. That the corn was grown and ripe, though not expressly mentioned, is implied in all that follows. *On the Sabbath*

*day*, literally *in the Sabbaths*, which may seem to indicate that this particular occurrence took place more than once, or that this clause is descriptive of a customary action. But the plural form of the Greek word is purely accidental, and arises either from assimilation to Greek names of festivals (compare John 10, 22), or from the fact that the Hebrew word *Sabbath* (*שַׁבָּת*) in its Aramaic form (*שְׁבָתָה*) resembles a Greek plural (*σάββατα*), and is often so inflected, although singular in meaning. *His disciples*, his immediate personal attendants, probably those whose call has previously been recorded, Peter and Andrew, James, and John, and Matthew, perhaps with the addition of some others who received his doctrine, and were therefore *his disciples* in a wider sense. Our Lord appears to have been seldom free from the society of others, either friends or foes, so that he was sometimes under the necessity of escaping from them for a time, especially for devotional purposes. (See above, on 1, 35.) *Began* is not a pleonastic or superfluous expression, but suggests that they were interrupted, or that while they were so doing, the ensuing dialogue took place. *Began, as they went, to pluck*, or, retaining the original construction, *they began to make way, plucking*. To *make way*, in the sense of going or proceeding, is a phrase found both in Hebrew (Judg. 17, 8), and in classic Greek, although the middle voice is commonly employed by the older writers. The obvious meaning is that they went along plucking the ears, or plucked them as they went. Yet one of the ablest German writers on this passage insists on what he calls the strict sense, namely, that they *made a way* or broke a path through the standing corn by plucking up the stalks, and that Mark's account, which says nothing of their eating the grains, is therefore at variance with those of Luke and Matthew! This may serve as an example of the influence exerted on interpretation by the supposed candor of exaggerating every real difference, and ingeniously contriving false ones, rather than adopt the common-sense expedient constantly employed in our tribunals, of allowing witnesses not otherwise discredited, to explain and supplement each other's statements, and of looking upon minor variations as confirming rather than impairing their essential agreement. Another objection to this forced construction is, that Mark, as well as Luke and Matthew, speaks of *ears* and not of *stalks*, and must therefore equally have reference to eating, and not to the breaking of a path, which could not be effected by merely plucking the ears of wheat or barley.

24. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath-day that which is not lawful?

*The Pharisees*, i. e. certain of that class who seem to have been near at hand whenever Christ appeared in public. This will be less surprising if we consider that the Pharisees were not a small and select body, but the great national party who insisted on the smallest points of difference between Jews and Gentiles, and most probably included the mass of the nation. (See above, on v. 18.) The expression here used, therefore, is nearly equivalent to saying, certain strict punctilious

Jews who happened to be present. Mark and Matthew represent them as complaining to the Master of his disciples; while, according to Luke, the objection was addressed to the latter. Both accounts are perfectly consistent, whether we suppose Luke to describe the indirect attack upon them as a direct one, or, which seems more natural, assume that both our Lord and his followers were thus addressed by different persons, either at once or in succession. *See*, behold, implying something strange and hard to be believed. *Why*, i. e. with what right, or by what authority? The question therefore implies censure, as in v. 7, 16, above. *On the Sabbath what is not lawful*, i. e. what is not lawful on the Sabbath. Instead of this obvious and natural construction, the writer above quoted understands the clause to mean, why do they on the Sabbath (as an aggravating circumstance) what is not lawful at any time, meaning the injury done to the corn by breaking a way through it? The simple act of plucking and eating was expressly allowed by the law of Moses (Deut. 23, 25.) The unlawfulness must therefore have consisted either in this wanton waste or in doing on the Sabbath what on any other day would have been lawful. But of waste or damage to the grain, the text, as we have seen, contains no trace or intimation. It was therefore not the act itself, but the time of its performance, that gave occasion to the charge before us, as we learn from Maimonides that the tradition of the fathers reckoned the act here described as a kind of harvesting or reaping, and as such forbidden labour on the Sabbath.

25. And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungered, he and they that were with him?

26. How he went into the house of God, in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shew bread, which is not lawful to eat, but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?

By a combination of the three accounts we learn that Christ defended his disciples from this frivolous and malignant charge by five distinct arguments, two of which have been preserved by all three gospels, one by Mark alone, and two by Matthew alone (12, 5-7.) The first place is assigned by all to the same answer. This is drawn from the Old Testament history, and presupposes their acquaintance with it, and their habit of reading it. It also presupposes their acknowledgment of David as an eminent servant of God, all whose official acts, unless divinely disapproved, afford examples to those placed in similar situations. The narrative referred to is still extant in 1 Samuel 21, 1-6, which is thus proved to be a part of the canon recognized by Christ. *The house of God*, in which he dwelt among his people, an expression no less applicable to the tabernacle than the temple. As the ancient sanctuary, under both its forms, was meant to symbolize the doctrine of divine inhabitation and peculiar presence with the cho-

sen people, it was movable as long as they were wandering and unsettled; but as soon as they had taken full possession of the promised land, which was not till the reign of David, the portable tent was exchanged for a permanent substantial dwelling. At the time here mentioned the tabernacle was at Nob (1 Sam. 21, 1.) The shew-bread, literally, *bread of presentation*, called in Hebrew, *bread of (the divine) face (or presence)*, consisted of twelve loaves or cakes placed in rows upon a table in the Holy Place or outward apartment of the tabernacle, and renewed every Sabbath, when the old were eaten by the priests on duty (Lev. 24, 5-9.) Whatever may have been the meaning of this singular observance, it was certainly a necessary and divinely instituted part of the tabernacle-service, resting on the same authority, though not of equal moment with the Sabbath. The relevancy of the case here cited is enhanced by the probability that David's desecration of the shew-bread was itself committed on the Sabbath, as the loaves appear to have been just renewed (1 Sam. 21, 6.) *It is not lawful*, i. e. not according to the law of Moses, which our Lord and his disciples were accused of breaking. In either case, the positive observance, though legitimate and binding, must give way to the necessity of self-preservation, a principle more formally propounded in the next verse. Before leaving this, however, we must notice an apparent inconsistency between the citation, as Mark gives it, and the original passage, where the priest who furnished David with the bread is called *Ahimelech*. Even if no solution could be given of this discrepancy, it would be absurd to let it shake our faith in the substantial truth of either narrative. It would not even be admissible, with Beza and his famous Codex, to omit the questionable clause as spurious, nor necessary to fall back upon the general liability of names and numbers to the risk of textual corruption. Even if the passage be retained, and in its ordinary form, there are several possible solutions, any one of which is far more likely than the supposition of a contradiction or a blunder, which would certainly have been detected and expunged, instead of being cherished and transmitted to posterity. The least probable of these solutions is the one which instead of *in the days of Abiathar* understands the Greek phrase (*ἐπὶ Α'βιάθαρ*) to mean in the passage of the sacred history of which Abiathar is the subject, as a like phrase in two other places is now commonly explained in that way. (See below, on 12, 26, and compare Rom. 11, 2.) Even admitting the correctness of the explanation there, which is disputed, it is here forbidden by the position of the words, which ought to have come after *did ye never read*, whereas they follow *how he entered*, and by the obvious consideration that the passage cited is not and could not be with any propriety called by the name of Abiathar. Another explanation of the discrepancy is that the Greek phrase means *in the presence of Abiathar*, although Ahimelech performed the act. But even if the fact were so, which is assumed without the slightest proof, why should a person merely present have been named, when the act in question was performed by another? The nearest approach to a satisfactory solution is afforded by the strange variation in the name of this priest in differ-

ent parts of the Old Testament itself. Thus we read of Ahiah the son of Ahitub (1 Sam. 14, 3). Abiathar the son of Ahimelech (1 Sam. 22, 20), Ahimelech the son of Abiathar (2 Sam. 8, 17), and Abimelech the son of Abiathar (1 Chr. 18, 16.) It is easy to assert, as some do, that these are also blunders of the author or transcriber; but it is no less easy to assert, and far more likely to be true, that both names, Abiathar and Ahimelech (Abimelech) were then hereditary in the sacerdotal race, and sometimes borne by the same person. Of this there is indeed no direct proof; if there were, the exegetical dispute would cease; but in a choice of difficulties, such as here presents itself, the hypothesis suggested is at least as probable as that of gross mistake and contradiction. It is best, however, as in all such cases, to leave the discrepancy unsolved rather than to solve it by unnatural and forced constructions. A difficulty may admit of explanation, although we may not be able to explain it, and the multitude of cases in which riddles once esteemed insoluble have since been satisfactorily settled, should encourage us to hope for like results in other cases, or to leave what still remains inexplicable undisturbed by efforts at solution which can only bring discredit on the Scriptures, or at least on its expounders, without really relieving the particular embarrassment to which they owe their origin.

27. And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.

Passing over the two arguments preserved by Matthew, one derived from the labours of the priests in the temple (12, 5. 6), and the other from Hosea's declaration of God's preference of human welfare even to required observances (Hos. 6, 6. Matt. 12, 7), Mark records an answer, found in neither of the others, though involved in the citation from Hosea, and perhaps originally uttered as a kind of paraphrase or commentary on it. If God chooses mercy, i. e. kind regard to human happiness, and not (i. e. rather than) sacrifice (or other ceremonial service), we might well conclude, though it were not recorded, that the Sabbath is an institution meant for human benefit, and therefore to be set aside when inconsistent with it, not a necessary and inexorable law, to which the interests of man must yield, whenever they are brought into collision. And if this was true even of the Sabbath as a purely divine institution, how much more of its corruptions and unauthorized additions. If the holy rest commanded on the seventh day might lawfully be broken for the sake of saving life or even mitigating its distresses, how much more must such emergencies dispense with an extravagant and uncommanded abstinence from active labour. *He said unto them*, i. e. further or again upon the same occasion, a formula frequently employed in such connections to distinguish sayings uttered at the same time, but on different topics. In the fourth chapter of this Gospel, for example, it occurs at least nine times (4, 8. 9. 11. 13. 21. 24. 26. 30. 35.)

28. Therefore, the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

This was an inference deduced from what had just been said as to the mutual connection between human welfare and sabbatical observance. *Therefore, or more exactly, so that* (as a necessary consequence), *the Son of man is lord* (not only of all other things affecting human happiness, but) *also (or even) of the Sabbath*, which you might suppose to be exempt from his control. Grotius and others have endeavoured to explain *Son of man*, in this place, as denoting any man or man in general. The sense will then be that as the Sabbath was appointed for man's benefit, it is his prerogative to regulate and use it for his own advantage. But to this construction, although specious, there are two invincible objections, one of form and one of substance. *First*, the sentiment expressed is not in keeping with the tenor of the Scriptures, which everywhere deny to man the right of abrogating or suspending a divine institution for his own good and at his own discretion. Such a prerogative can belong only to a divine person, i. e. to God as God, or to God incarnate in the person of Messiah. In the next place, it is only to this person, the Messiah, that the usage of the Scriptures will allow the title Son of Man to be applied. (See above, on v. 10.) The meaning of the sentence therefore must be, that the Sabbath having been ordained for man, not for any individual, but for the whole race, it must needs be subject to the Son of Man, who is its head and representative, its sovereign and redeemer. This implies that though the Sabbath, in its essence, is perpetual, the right of modifying and controlling it belongs to Christ, and can be exercised only under his authority.



### CHAPTER III.

In continuation of the narrative begun in the preceding chapter, Mark records a second charge of Sabbath-breaking, with our Lord's defence, and its effect upon his enemies (1-6.) Meantime his fame and popularity were growing, not diminished by the partly repressed testimony of the evil spirits whoun he cast out (7-12.) At this important juncture, when his popularity is at its height, he completes his first step towards the reorganization of the Church, by formally embodying the twelve Apostles (13-19.) The concourse still continues, and his friends endeavour to restrain his labours (19-21.) On the other hand, the rancour of the scribes from Jerusalem now goes so far as to accuse him of alliance with the evil one, in answering which charge he teaches them the fearful doctrine of the sin against the Holy Ghost (20-30.) On the same occasion, he declares his independence of all natural rela-

tions, when in conflict with the duty which he owed to his great spiritual family (31-35.)

1. And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.

Mark records another charge of Sabbath-breaking, probably to show how various were the outward occasions of such opposition; to illustrate the variety of Christ's defences; and to mark the first concerted plan for his destruction. *Again*, that is, on a different occasion from the one referred to in 2, 21. *The synagogue*, most probably the one there mentioned, which was in Capernaum. Here, as in 2, 23, the absence of any more specific note of time shows that exact chronological order was of small importance to the author's object. There is somewhat more precision as to this point in the parallel accounts of Luke (6, 11) and Matthew (12, 9.) There is no ground in the text of either gospel for the conjecture of some writers, that the presence of this sufferer had been contrived in order to entrap Christ. The constant application for his healing aid precludes the necessity of such a supposition, and indeed suggests that this was only one of many miracles performed at this time, and is recorded in detail on account of its important bearing on the progress of Christ's ministry. *Withered*, literally, *dried* or *dried up*, elsewhere applied to liquids (5, 29. Rev. 16, 12), and to plants (4, 6, 11, 20. James 1, 11), but also to the pining away of the human body (see below, on 9, 18.) The passive participle adds to the meaning of the adjective (*dry*) employed by Matthew and Luke, the idea that it was not a congenital infirmity, but the effect of disease or accident, the more calamitous because it was the right hand that was thus disabled (Luke 6, 6.) A similar affection, preternaturally caused, was that of Jeroboam (1 Kings 13, 4-6.)

2. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath-day; that they might accuse him.

We have here a striking indication that the opposition to our Saviour was becoming more inveterate and settled, so that his enemies not only censured what he did, but watched for some occasion to find fault with him. *Watched*, i. e. closely or intently, as suggested by the compound form of the Greek verb, both here and in Acts 9, 24. *Whether he would*, literally, *if he will*, a form of speech which represents the scene as actually passing. *On the Sabbath-day*, literally, *the Sabbaths*, a form used above in 2, 24, and there explained. The motive of their watching was not simply curiosity, but a deliberate desire to entrap him. *That they might accuse him*, not in conversation merely, but before the local judges, who were probably identical with the elders or rulers of the synagogue, or at all events present at the stated time and place of public worship. The subject of the verb is not expressed by Mark and Matthew, although easily supplied from the fore-

going context (2, 24. Matt. 12, 2), and from the parallel account in Luke (6, 7), where the scribes and Pharisees are expressly mentioned.

3. And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

This direction to the patient is placed by Matthew (12, 13) after the address to his accusers, but without asserting that it was not given sooner, as would seem to be the case from the accounts of Mark and Luke, who represent it as a sort of preparation for the subsequent discourse, which would be rendered more impressive by the sight of the man standing *in the midst*, i. e. among them, and no doubt in a conspicuous position, but not necessarily in the exact centre of the house or the assembly. This phrase is omitted in our version, or included in the phrase *stand forth*. The Greek verb is the same with that in 1, 31. 2, 9. 11. 12, and strictly means to rouse another or one's self, especially from sleep. (See below, on 4, 27, and compare Matt. 8, 25. Luke 8, 24.)

4. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath-days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? but they held their peace.

Before proceeding to perform the miracle, he appeals to them as to the question of its lawfulness, retorting the same question which they had already put to him (Matt. 12, 10), as if he had said, ‘answer your own question; I will leave it to yourselves, and will abide by your decision, not however as expressed in words alone, but in your actions’ (Matt. 12, 11. 12.) *Is it lawful*, not right in itself, but consistent with the law of Moses, and with your acknowledged obligation to obey it (see above, on 2, 24. 26.) *To do good* and *to do evil* may, according both to etymology and usage, mean *to do right* and *to do wrong* in the general (1 Pet. 3, 16. 17. 3 John, 11), or *to do good* and *to injure* in particular (Acts 14, 17.) On the former supposition the meaning of the sentence is, ‘You will surely admit that it is lawful to do right in preference to wrong on the Sabbath, as on any other day.’ But as this is little more than an identical proposition, or at least an undisputed truism (namely, that what is right is lawful), most interpreters prefer the other explanation, according to which our Lord is not asserting a mere truism, which his hearers were as ready to acknowledge as himself, but pointing out their obvious mistake as to the nature of the action which they had condemned beforehand. Stripped of its interrogative form, the sentence contains two distinct but consecutive propositions. The first is that it must be lawful, even on the Sabbath, to confer a favour or to do a kindness, when the choice lies between that and the doing of an injury. Even if not absolutely lawful, it would certainly become so in the case of such an alternative. The next proposition is that this rule, which is true in general, is emphatically true when the alternative is that of life and death. To this may be added,

as a tacit influence, not formally deduced, but left to be drawn by the hearers for themselves, that such a case was that before them, in which to refuse help was virtually to destroy. This is not to be strictly understood as meaning that unless the withered hand were healed at once the man would die, but as exemplifying that peculiar method of presenting extreme cases, which is one of the most marked characteristics of our Saviour's teaching. As in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere (see below, on 9, 43. 48), he instructs us what we must be prepared to do in an extreme case, thus providing for all others; so here he exhibits the conclusion, to which their reasoning naturally tended, as a proof that it must be erroneous. If the rest of the Sabbath was not only a divine requisition, but an intrinsic, absolute necessity, to which all human interests must yield, this could be no less true in an extreme case than in any other, so that life itself must be sacrificed to it. This revolting conclusion could be avoided only by admitting that the obligation of the Sabbath rested on authority, and might by that authority be abrogated or suspended. This implies that such authority belonged to him, that he was not acting as a mere man, or a prophet, but as the Son of man, and as such lord of the Sabbath; so that, although his answer upon this occasion is in form quite different from that before recorded, it amounts to the same thing, and proceeds upon the same essential principle. Thus understood, the sentence may be paraphrased as follows: 'You consider me a breaker of the law, because I heal upon the Sabbath; but you must admit that where the choice is between doing good and evil, for example, between saving life and killing upon that day, we are bound to choose the former. There is therefore some limit or exception to the obligation which you urge upon yourselves and others, not indeed to be decided by your own discretion or caprice, but by the same authority which first imposed it. Now that authority I claim to exercise, a claim abundantly attested by the very miracles on which your charge is founded, for no man can do such things unless God be with him.' (Compare John 3, 2.)

5. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched (it) out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

We have here an instance of what some regard as characteristic of this gospel, and ascribe to Peter's influence upon it, to wit, the occasional description of our Saviour's feelings, looks, and gestures, most of which details we owe exclusively to Mark. (See above, on 2, 41.) Three such particulars are here recorded, one external, two internal. *Looking round upon (or at) them* is an act mentioned by Luke also (6, 10), with the addition of the strong word *all*. But Mark tells what feelings were expressed by this act, or at least accompanied it. One was *anger*, a passion belonging to our original con-

stitution, and as such not sinful in itself, and therefore shared by the humanity of Christ, in whom it was a holy indignation or intense displeasure at what really deserves it, unalloyed by that excess or that malignity which renders human anger almost always sinful. The absence of the quality last named in this case is apparent from the other feeling mentioned, that of grief or sorrow. *Grieved with* is in Greek a compound verb, admitting of two explanations, one of which makes the particle in composition refer to the anger previously mentioned, *being grieved* (in conjunction or at the same time) *with* that anger. But the classical usage of such writers as Plato, Theophrastus, Diodorus, is in favour of referring the particle in question, not to the anger, but to those who caused it, so as to express a sympathetic sorrow. Looking round with anger and yet grieving (sympathizing) with them. In the very act of condemning their sin, he pitied the miserable state to which it had reduced them. The specific object of this sympathetic grief or pity was the *hardness of their heart*, including intellectual stupidity and insensibility of feeling. The first Greek word is less exactly rendered *blindness* in the margin of our Bible, and in the text of Rom. 11, 25. Eph. 4, 18. But the figure, although not suggested by the Greek word, is expressive of two things which it denotes, a state of mental and spiritual apathy or insensibility. There is here no mention of external contact (as in 1, 31. 41), nor of any other order or command than that to stretch out the hand, which could only be obeyed when the miracle was wrought, and is therefore not required as a previous condition. This is often and justly used to illustrate the act of faith, which is performed in obedience to divine command and by the aid of the same power which requires it. *Whole (or sound) as the other*, though expunged in this place by the critics as a mere assimilation to Matt. 12, 13 (compare Luke 6, 10), may be used to illustrate Mark's laconic phrase, in which it is really implied.

6. And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

One of the most important circumstances of this case, for the sake of which it was perhaps recorded (see above, on v. 1), is the effect which it produced upon the Pharisees or High-Church Jewish party, whose religious tenets brought them into constant opposition to the Sadducees or latitudinarians (see above, on 2, 18), as their political or national exclusiveness arrayed them against the Herodians or followers of Herod, and as such defenders of the Roman domination, of which the Herods were the instruments and agents. Herod the Great, created king by the Romans, and enabled by their aid to take possession of his kingdom, was devoted to their service both from interest and inclination; and although upon his death his dominions were divided, and his eldest son Archelaus had been superseded in Judea by Roman procurators, two other sons of Herod were still reigning (Luke 3, 1), Antipas in Galilee, Samaria, and Perea, and Philip in Trachon-

nitis and Iturea. Even in Judea, the Herodian interest and party still existed, as the most extreme political antithesis to that of the Pharisees. It is therefore a clear proof of growing hatred to our Saviour, that these opposite extremes should now begin to coalesce for his destruction, an alliance which appears to have continued till its object was accomplished (see below, on 12, 13.) *Going out* (from the synagogue) *immediately*, as soon as the miracle was wrought, and therefore in full view of the proof which it afforded of our Lord's divine legation; a conclusive confirmation of that hardness and judicial blindness which had excited his own grief and anger. *Took counsel* is a phrase peculiar to Matthew (12, 14. 22, 15. 27, 1. 7. 28, 12), Mark's equivalent to which is *made counsel*, i. e. consultation (see below, on 15, 1.) *How they might destroy him*, not for any past offences, but how they might take advantage of his words or acts to rid them of so dangerous an enemy. The motives of this concerted opposition were no doubt various, religious, political, and personal, in different degrees and cases. That it should have been deliberately organized, at this time, out of such discordant elements and in the face of such conclusive evidence, can only be ascribed to the infatuation under which they acted (Luke 6, 11.)

7. But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea.

In consequence of this combination and the dangers which arose from it (Matt. 12, 15), our Lord withdrew from Capernaum and other towns of Galilee, to the shores of the lake, where he would be less exposed to craft or violence, and better able to escape without a miracle. This retreat before his enemies was prompted, not by fear, but by that wise discretion which was constantly employed in the selection and the use of the necessary means for the promotion of the great end which he came to accomplish. As it entered into the divine plan that his great atoning work should be preceded by a prophetic ministry of several years' duration, the design of which was to indoctrinate the people in the nature of his kingdom, to prepare the way for its erection, and to train the men by whom it should be organized, it formed no small part of his work to check and regulate the progress of events, so as not to precipitate the consummation, but secure and complete the requisite preparatory process. That the movement here recorded was intended to elude his enemies, whose influence was greatest in the towns, and not to escape the concourse of the people, may be seen from the actual result as Mark describes it. So far was the multitude from being diminished by this change of place, that it seems to have reached its height at this point, where the history pauses, as it were, to indicate the various sources of the living stream which now continually followed him. The first here named is *Galilee*, the northern province (see above, on 1, 14), where he resided, and in which, according to the prophecy (Matt. 4, 13-15), his ministry was chiefly

exercised. Under this name and *Judea* is perhaps included the whole country west of Jordan, or the terms may be more strictly understood as excluding the middle tract, Samaria, the inhabitants of which had no dealings with the Jews (John 4, 10), and may have been unwilling to unite with them even in attending on the new religious teacher.

8. And from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and (from) beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

*Jerusalem* is distinguished from *Judea* (as in 1, 5), on account of its importance as the great religious centre of the country and the seat of the theocracy. *Idumea*, which occurs only here in the New Testament, was the Greek modification of the Hebrew *Edom*, as applied to the country occupied by the sons of Esau (Gen. 25, 30, 36, 1), on the south-east of Palestine, along the eastern side of the great valley (Arabah) which extends from the Dead Sea to the Red Sea (Akabah.) The Edomites, hereditary enemies of Israel (Ex. 15, 15. Num. 20, 21. 1 Sam. 14, 47), were subdued by David (2 Sam. 8, 14), but during the captivity encroached upon the Holy Land (Ezek. 36, 5), and were again conquered and incorporated with the Jews by John Hyrcanus, one of the Maccabees or Hasmonean princes, about one hundred and twenty-five years before the birth of Christ. *Idumea*, therefore, was a sort of border-land between the Jews and Gentiles. It was from it that the Herod family derived its origin. *Beyond Jordan*, called by the Greek geographers *Perea*, a name derived from the preposition here used ( $\pi\epsilon\rho\alpha\tau$ ), and in itself indefinite, though limited by usage to that part of the land of Israel which was east of Jordan. This, as well as *Idumea*, would include a large extent of frontier territory, where the Jews were in immediate contact, if not actually mingled with the Gentiles; and the same is true of the next phrase, *those about Tyre and Sidon*. These were the two famous cities of Phenicia, the narrow strip of sea-coast north of Palestine, distinguished in the ancient world for its maritime commerce. Sidon (or Zidon) was the more ancient (Gen. 10, 19. 49, 13), but was afterwards eclipsed by Tyre (Josh. 19, 29. Ez. 27, 32.) As the whole importance of Phenicia was derived from these two cities, it is designated by their joint names (Jer. 47, 4. Joel 3, 4. Zech. 9, 2. Matt. 11, 21. Luke 10, 13. Acts 12, 20.) The phrase here used may denote either the Phenicians, or the Israelites dwelling on their borders, or more probably both, as we have no reason to believe that the multitudes which followed Jesus were composed exclusively of Jews. That the reference is here more especially to the heathen Phenicians may be gathered, with some degree of probability, from the structure of the sentence, which appears to distinguish between two great multitudes, first one from Galilee, Judea, Idumea, and Perea, and then one composed of those about Tyre and Sidon, who, *having heard how many and what great things* ( $\ddot{\sigma}\alpha$ ) *he was doing* ( $\epsilon\nu\omega\epsilon\iota$ ), *came to him*. This seems to imply that they were more remote or beyond the

limits of the Holy Land, and are therefore separately mentioned as *a great multitude*, additional to that described in the preceding clauses. This is the fullest statement to be found in any of the Gospels as to the extent of our Lord's personal influence and the composition of the multitudes who followed him. (Compare Luke 6, 17.)

9. And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him, because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.

The little circumstance here mentioned, which would naturally dwell in the memory of an eye and ear witness, adds a graphic stroke to the picture of this vast assemblage. So great was the concourse on the lake-shore that our Saviour, both for safety and convenience, ordered a vessel to be kept in readiness, to which he might retire either to escape the throng or as a more commodious place from which to address them, as we know that he had sometimes done before (Luke 5, 3.) *A small ship*, or rather *boat*, the Greek diminutive (*πλοιάριον*) denoting something smaller even than the fishing boats (*πλοῖα*) so often mentioned in the Gospels (see above, on 1, 20.) *He spoke to his disciples*, perhaps in the form of a request, but with the force of a command. *His disciples*, those in constant and immediate attendance on his person (see above, on 2, 23.) *Wait on him*, literally stick close (or adhere) to him, elsewhere applied to personal attendance on another (Acts 8, 13. 10, 7) or on duty (Acts 1, 14. 2, 42. 6, 4.) It here means that it should be constantly within reach and accessible. *The multitude*, not the word twice used above (in vs. 7. 8), but one which answers more exactly to the English *crowd*, as implying not mere numbers, but confusion and strong pressure, which is there expressed distinctly in the last clause, *lest they should* (or *that they might not*) *throng him*, crowd or press upon him, a verb elsewhere used in a figurative sense for the pressure of distress or prevention (e. g. 1 Th. 3, 4. 2 Th. 1, 6. 7.) This was not a mere provision for his ease or comfort, but a necessary means to the performance of the work in which he was engaged.

10. For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.

The pressure mentioned in the last verse was not merely that which is unavoidable in all crowds, but an extraordinary movement caused by his miraculous performances. *He had healed*, or more exactly, as the verb is not in the pluperfect but the aorist, *he healed*, at that time, or, as we should say, *was healing*. *Many*, i. e. no doubt all who sought his aid (see above, on 34.) *So that*, in their eagerness to reach him and partake of his miraculous gifts, *they pressed upon him*, literally, *fell on* (or *against him*), a strong but natural expression for the movement here described. Their desire to touch him was not superstitious, but expressive of their faith in his capacity to heal them, with perhaps

too limited a view of this capacity as only to be exercised by actual contact. *Plagues* (compare Luke 6, 19), literally *scourges*, i. e. divine chastisements. The English word itself means originally stripes or strokes. Here again we have reason to believe that all who were diseased experienced his healing power.

11. And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.

12. And he straitly charged them, that they should not make him known.

On this as on other like occasions (see above, 1, 24. 34), particular attention must have been attracted by the expulsion of evil spirits, who continued to bear testimony to his person, whenever or as soon as they beheld him, falling down before him as an act of homage, and proclaiming him to be the Son of God. Here too we find him checking this presumption, not only because he was dishonored by their testimony, but *that they might not make him manifest*, i. e. reveal his character and office prematurely and precipitately, so as to defeat his purpose, which required a more deliberate and gradual disclosure. (See above, on 1, 34.) Here again the intimate possession of the man by the indwelling demon is denoted by the promiscuous ascription of the acts described to both, as performed by the one under the extraordinary influence of the other. This may also serve to explain Matthew's somewhat different statement (12, 16), that he gave this charge and prohibition to all whom he healed, which may be literally true (see above, on 1, 43), and Mark may simply have selected one class out of many who were thus forbidden. While the sick in general were required not to make him known by giving undue or premature publicity to what they had experienced, a particular restriction was imposed upon the more explicit testimony borne to his Messiahship by evil spirits.

13. And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth (unto him) whom he would: and they came unto him.

It formed, as we have seen (on 1, 16), no part of our Lord's personal errand upon earth to reorganize the Church, as this change was to rest upon his own atoning death as its foundation. For the same reason, he did not develop the whole system of Christian doctrine, but left both these tasks to be accomplished after his departure, yet preparing the way for both, by teaching the true nature of his kingdom, and by training those who should complete the Church, both as to its organization and its creed. This preparatory process was a very gradual one, as we learn from the occasional and incidental statements of the history, which nowhere gives us a connected and complete account of it. The first step which we can trace is his reception of two of John's disciples, first as guests or visitors, and then no doubt as friends

and pupils, but as yet without requiring their continual attendance on his person (see John 1, 35-40.) One of these two we know to have been Andrew (ib. 41), and the other is commonly believed to have been John the son of Zebedee, who never names himself in his own gospel. In pursuance of the Saviour's plan, each of these two introduced a brother (Simon and James.) A fifth, directly called by Christ himself, was Philip (John 1, 44), who in his turn brought Nathanael, recognized by Jesus as an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile (John 1, 48), that is to say, a genuine, sincere adherent of the old theocracy, according to its true design and import as a preparation for Messiah's reign, and therefore ready to acknowledge him as soon as he should give some proof of his Messiahship (John 1, 49, 50.) A seventh, called immediately by Christ himself, was Levi or Matthew (see above, on 2, 14, 15.) As the history of all these calls is only incidental, we may argue by analogy from one to the other, and as those first mentioned seem to have continued in their former occupations some time after their first introduction to their Master, it is not unlikely that the same happened in the other cases, though the writer's plan did not require it to be expressly mentioned. We have then two successive and distinct steps in the process of preparing men to organize the Church; first the personal vocation of at least seven persons into Christ's society, as friends and pupils; then a second call to constant personal attendance. The third step is that recorded here by Mark, to wit, the more formal designation of twelve persons to the Apostolic office. As we know that at least half of these had been previously called, and at least one fourth of them at two distinct times, it is highly probable that a like intimation had been given to the remaining six or seven. It would then be true of all, as it certainly is of those referred to, that the choice or calling here described did not take them by surprise, but merely carried out a purpose previously made known to them. Mark connects this designation of the twelve with the immense concourse just described, but only by juxtaposition, without any express specification of time. Luke (6, 12) does indicate the time, but very vaguely (*in these days*), and Matthew omits all mention of the twelve until he comes to their actual entrance on their work (Matt. 10, 1), which is a fourth stage in this gradual preparatory process. What is here described is neither the original vocation of the individual Apostles, nor their final going forth in that capacity, but the intermediate step of publicly embodying or organizing those who had been previously chosen one by one, or two by two, that they might now, as a collective body, be prepared for active service. This view of the matter is entirely consistent with Luke's statement that he chose them now (Luke 6, 13), for this was not an act that could not be repeated, and with Mark's, that *he called to him whom he would*, which only excludes self-choice and popular election, but not a previous designation on his own part. *And they went away to him*, i. e. from the promiscuous assembly out of which he called them. Both evangelists (see Luke 6, 12) represent this scene as taking place upon a mountain, or rather *the mountain*, definitely so called because afterwards universally familiar for this very

reason, and as having given name to the "Sermon on the Mount." Another explanation of this definite expression, preferred by some interpreters, is that here and elsewhere in the gospels it denotes not a single mountain in the ordinary sense, but the highlands upon either side of Jordan, as distinguished from the lowlands on the sea-coast.

14. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.

*Ordained* is in Greek not a technical expression, but a very common verb, meaning *made*, i. e. out of the whole number present, or, as some think, out of the selected number whom he called to him, he constituted or created twelve to be a body by themselves; for what purpose, and with what official functions, is expressed in the remainder of the verse. *That they might be with him*, as constant personal attendants, and as learners, to be trained for their subsequent work, both by precept and example. *And that he might send them out to preach*, proclaim, announce, or herald, the approach of the Messiah's kingdom, thus relieving and assisting him, as he had first assisted and then superseded John the Baptist. It has been observed that Mark uses neither of the two official titles corresponding to the two designs here stated, though he does employ the verb from which the second is derived. The twelve were to be with him as *disciples* (*μαθηταί*, from *μανθάνω*, to learn), and then to go out from him as *apostles* (*ἀπόστολοι*, from *ἀποστέλλω*, to send forth.) This title, though omitted here, was not a later designation, but one given at the time by Christ himself (Luke 6, 13.) It is a curious fact, showing that the inspiration of the sacred writers did not destroy their individuality of style and manner, that while the word *disciple* is used freely and frequently in all the gospels, *apostle* occurs only once in Matthew (10, 2), once in Mark (6, 30), and not at all in John, except in the original and wide sense of a messenger (13, 16); while Luke employs it six times in his gospel, and thirty times in Acts.

15. And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.

The construction is continued from the verse preceding, *to preach* and *to have* being both dependent on the verb *send forth*. *Authority*, delegated power, to work miracles of healing, and especially of dis-possession, which are singled out and separately mentioned, as in 1, 32. 34, and for the reason there explained. This miraculous power is not to be regarded as an independent and co-ordinate function of the apostolic office, but as subsidiary to the main one of preaching or proclaiming the Messiah's kingdom, both as an attestation of their message, and as a means of arousing attention and securing its reception. As the twelve were to relieve their Master in his work of proclamation, so they were to be provided with the same means of authenticating and enforcing it which he employed himself, but only as his delegates or

representatives, who spoke and acted always in his name, and by his sovereign authority.

### 16. And Simon he surnamed Peter.

We have four independent lists of the Apostles in the New Testament, differing chiefly in the order of the names, but also as to several of the names themselves. One of these catalogues is given here by Mark, one by Matthew (10, 2-4), and the remaining two by Luke (6, 14-16. Acts 1, 13.) Bengel was probably the first to observe that although the arrangement of the names is so unlike in these four documents, the variation is confined to certain limits, as the twelve may be divided into three quaternions, which are never interchanged, and the leading names of which are the same in all. Thus Peter is invariably the first, Philip the fifth, James the ninth, and Iscariot the last, except in Acts, where his name is omitted on account of his apostasy and death. *Simon he surnamed* (literally, *he imposed on Simon the name*) *Peter*. This has been represented as at variance with the statement made by John (1, 43), that the change of name was made at Simon's first introduction to the Saviour. But Mark does not say when the new name was imposed, and only mentions it in order to give both the names by which the great Apostle was familiarly known. Besides, there is no improbability in the supposition that the words were repeated upon this, as they were upon a subsequent occasion (Matthew 16, 18.) The name itself does not denote constancy or firmness, which were not peculiar traits of Peter's character, but strength and boldness, or the founding of the church upon a rock, as taught in the last cited words of Matthew. The new name did not wholly supersede the old one, as in the case of Saul and Paul (Acts 13, 9); for we find the latter still employed by Christ himself (see below, 14, 37, and compare Matt. 16, 16. 17, 17, 25. Luke 22, 31. John 21, 16, 17), as well as by the other Apostles (Luke 24, 34. Acts 15, 14.) Throughout the gospel of John (6, 8. 68, &c.) and in the opening words of Peter's second epistle, both names are combined. The place assigned to Peter, in all the lists of the Apostles, is not fortuitous, nor founded simply on his being one of those first called; for Andrew then would take precedence of him. That it does not, on the other hand, imply a permanent superiority of rank or office may be argued from the fact that no such primacy is anywhere ascribed to him; that he was frequently betrayed into the gravest errors, both of judgment and of practice, and repeatedly rebuked with great severity by Christ himself; and lastly, that he alone of the eleven went so far as to deny his Master, and continued under the reproach of that apostasy until the risen Saviour condescended to restore him (John 21, 15-17.) His true historical position is that of spokesman to the college of Apostles, like the foreman of a jury or the chairman of a large committee. This place was not assigned him for his own distinction, but for the convenience of his Master and his brethren, in whose name and behalf he often speaks, and is addressed in turn. He was qualified for the position, not by any

moral superiority, but by his forwardness of speech and action, often accompanied by rashness and inconstancy of temper. Even after the effusion of the Holy Spirit, which corrected and subdued these constitutional infirmities, we find some trace of them in Peter's course at Antioch, reproved by Paul, and recorded in Gal. 2, 11-14.

17. And James the (son) of Zebedee, and John the brother of James, and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder.

*James* and *John* are accusatives in Greek, but without any verb to govern them, unless *ordained* or *made* be repeated from v. 14; but the sense is not obscured by this interrupted and irregular construction. The persons meant are those whose call has been already mentioned in 1, 19. 20. We here learn the name of their father, whom they then left with the hired men in the boat. John is described as the son of Zebedee, and James as the brother of John, apart from whom he is never mentioned. This is the more remarkable as James was the first and John the last of the Apostles who died. James was also the first martyr of the apostolic body (see Acts 12, 2.) These illustrious brothers Mark puts next to Peter, whose own brother Andrew is thereby transferred to the fourth place; whereas Matthew (10, 2) names the two pairs of brothers in the order of their previous vocation as recorded in 1, 16. 19. Luke adopts the same arrangement in his gospel (6, 14), but in Acts (1, 13) agrees with Mark's. *Surnamed*, as in v. 16, literally, *imposed names upon them*, which implies a magisterial authority. The name itself (*Boanerges*) is no doubt a double modification (Greek and Aramaic) of some Hebrew phrase which cannot now be certainly identified, but which is here translated by Mark himself. *Sons of thunder* has been commonly explained as an oriental figure for powerful preachers, and the word *Boanerges* has become proverbial in this sense, even as a singular, whereas it is determined to be plural both by the Greek version and by the preceding plural noun (*names*). It has been objected that these brother-fishermen could scarcely be distinguished for their eloquence when called to be apostles; but the name might be prophetic, as it was in Peter's case. A stronger argument against this explanation is that a title so honourable and so closely connected with their office, would most probably have been perpetuated, or at least repeated in their history. A third objection, that the gentle John could not have been a son of thunder, rests upon a widespread but erroneous notion as to this Apostle's character and temper. Because he is called the disciple whom Jesus loved, and because he dwells in his first epistle on the love of God as his favourite theme, he has been generally painted and described in words as distinguished by a feminine softness, which is sometimes pushed so far as to be quite disgusting. It is well known, however, that the most intense affection is compatible with an ardent temper and ambitious spirit, of both which qualities we find some traces in the words and actions of these apostolical brothers. (See below, on 10, 35-40, and compare

Luke 9, 49-56.) Hence some suppose that they were called *sons of thunder* for this very reason, or with special reference to their proposition in Luke 9, 54. But the name, whatever may have been its Aramaic form, has reference to the noise of thunder, not to lightning or to "fire from heaven." Besides, the name, as thus explained, would be one of reproach, and as such most unlikely to be thus embalmed in history. In this uncertainty, it seems best to adhere to what is certainly revealed, to wit, that these two favourite disciples, who, with Peter, were admitted to a more confidential intimacy with their Lord, received from him, on some occasion now unknown, the striking but mysterious appellation, *Sons of Thunder*.

### 18. And Andrew and Philip, and Bartholomew and Matthew, and Thomas and James the (son) of Alpheus, and Thaddeus and Simon the Canaanite.

One observable distinction between Mark's and Matthew's lists of the Apostles is, that the latter arranges them in pairs throughout, while the former enumerates them singly, *and* being inserted between every two names. Such points of difference, however unimportant in themselves, are not without their value as proofs of distinct and independent origin, excluding the hypothesis of mere transcription or abridgment. *Andrew* and *Philip* are old Greek names, the former being found in Herodotus, and the latter everywhere in ancient history. These Apostles probably had Hebrew names besides, which had been gradually superseded by the Greek ones. It was very common for the Jews of that age to have double names, one native and one foreign. (Compare Acts 1, 22. 9, 36. 12, 12. 13, 1. 9.) *Andrew* and *Philip* were among the earliest of Christ's disciples, *Andrew* having previously followed John the Baptist, by whom he was led to Jesus as the lamb of God, and not only followed him, but brought his brother *Simon* (Peter) to him (John, 1, 41-43.) *Philip* was called by Christ himself the next day, as he was about to remove from Judea into Galilee. *Philip*, though he seems to have been called in Judea, was a Galilean and a townsman of *Andrew* and *Peter* (John 1, 44. 45.) He was himself the introducer of *Nathanael*, upon whom our Lord pronounced so high a commendation (John 1, 48), but who never afterwards appears by that name until after the resurrection, when we find him in company with four, and probably with six of the Apostles (John 21, 2.) This has led to the not improbable conclusion that *Nathanael* was the person called *Bartholomew*, in all the lists of the Apostles, and in three of them placed next to *Philip* (compare Matt. 10, 3. Luke 6, 14), while the fourth only introduces *Thomas* between them (Acts 1, 13.) *Nathanael* was a resident of Cana in Galilee, the scene of Christ's first miracle (John 2, 1. 4, 46. 21, 2.) *Matthew*, whose previous vocation is recorded in 2, 14. (Luke 5, 27), where he is called *Levi*; but he calls himself *Matthew*, in describing that event, and in his list of the Apostles (10, 3) adds *the publican*, omitted by the others. *Thomas* was also called *Didymus*, the two names being Aramaic and Greek synonyms, both

meaning a *twin*. Besides the lists of the Apostles, Thomas is named eight times in the Gospel of John (11, 16, 14, 5, 20, 24-29, 21, 2.) *James the son of Alpheus*, as the ellipsis is no doubt to be supplied. The latter seems to be a Greek modification of an Aramaic name, of which *Clopas* (John 19, 25), is supposed to be another form. Now, as Clopas was the husband of the Virgin Mary's sister (see below, on 15, 40), his son would be the cousin of our Lord, and might, according to a common Hebrew idiom, be called his brother. (See below, on 6, 3, and compare Gal. 1, 19.) *Thaddeus* occurs only here and in Matt. 10, 3, where it is given as the surname of *Lebbeus*, a name only mentioned there. But as these evangelists omit the name of *Judas* (*not Iscariot*, John 14, 22), which is given by Luke (6, 16. Acts 1, 13), it seems to follow that this *Judas*, *Thaddeus*, and *Lebbeus* were one and the same person. Some suppose the last two names to be synonymous, because derived from Hebrew or Aramaic words, meaning *heart* and *breast*; but this is doubtful. Luke describes him in both places as *the (son) of James*, if the ellipsis be supplied as in the case of *James the (son) of Alpheus*, or *the (brother) of James*, as most interpreters explain it and refer it to the *James* just mentioned. *Judas* may then be identified with *Jude*, the brother of the Lord, and the author of the short epistle near the end of the New Testament canon (see below, on 6, 3, and compare Jude, v. 1.) *Simon the Canaanite*, not an inhabitant of Canaan, or of Cana, both which would be written otherwise in Greek, but a Zealot, as it is explained by Luke (6, 15. Acts 1, 13), and as the name itself, according to its Hebrew etymology, would signify. It may be descriptive of his personal character and temper, but much more probably of his connection with the sect or party of the Zealots, as fanatical adherents to the Jewish institutions and opponents of all compromise with heathenism, who assumed the right of executing summary justice after the example of Phineas (Numb. 25, 7. Ps. 106, 30), and by their sanguinary excesses caused or hastened the destruction of Jerusalem. To this party, of which traces may be elsewhere found in the New Testament (see below, on 15, 7, and compare Acts 23, 12). *Simon* may have been attached before he was named as an apostle. The juxtaposition of his name with those of *James* and *Jude* (see Luke, 6, 15. Acts 1, 13), exhibits a coincidence with 6, 3, which can hardly be fortuitous, and naturally leads to the conclusion that this *Simon* was also one of our Lord's brethren. (See below, on 6, 3.)

### 19. And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him : and they went into an house.

*Iscariot* has been variously explained as an appellative, but is now commonly agreed to be a local name, denoting *man of Kerioth*, as the similar form *Istobos*, used by Josephus, means a *man of Tob*. As Kerioth was a town of Judah (Josh. 15, 25), *Judas* is the only one of the Apostles whom we have any reason to regard as not a Galilean. *Also*, i. e. besides being an Apostle, or although he was one, which was a fearful aggravation of his guilt.

(See below, on 14, 43, and compare Acts 1, 17. 25.) *Betrayed*, though necessarily implied, is not the exact import of the verb, which simply means to give up or deliver into the power of another, by judicial process (Matt. 5, 25. 18, 34,) or by recommendation to his favour. (Acts 14, 26. 15, 40.) But its constant application to the act of Judas in betraying Christ, has given it a secondary sense equivalent to the stronger terms employed by Luke (*betrayer, traitor*.) The choice of this man to be one of the immediate followers of Christ, with perfect knowledge of his character and foresight of his treason (John 6, 64. 70, 71), is undoubtedly surprising, and at variance with the course which human wisdom would have marked out. But the foolishness of God is wiser than men (1 Cor. 1, 25), and it may have been a part of the divine plan to illustrate by the history of Judas the sovereignty of God in choosing even his most honoured instruments, without regard to any merit of their own, as well as to forewarn the church that absolute purity, although to be desired and aimed at, cannot be expected even in her highest places during her militant condition, or at least to guard her against terror and despair, when such defections do occur, by constantly reminding her that of the twelve whom Christ selected to be with him and to go out from him (see above, on v. 14), one was declared by himself to be a “devil,” and a “son of perdition.” (John 6, 70. 17, 12.) *And they went into an house*, would be a very unimportant circumstance in this connection, and the true sense is most probably that given in the margin, and long before by Wiclif, *they came home*, i. e. returned to Capernaum again, as their head-quarters and the centre of their operations. See above, on 1, 21. 2, 1, where the same Greek phrase (*εἰς οἶκον*) means *at home*. By noting these departures and returns of Christ to one fixed point, it will be seen that he was constantly engaged in a methodical survey and visitation of the country, or at least of Galilee. (See above, on 1, 14. 39.)

20. And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.

As on his previous return to his own city (see above, on 2, 1), the concourse still continued, or was immediately renewed. The greatness and pressure of the crowd are here described in terms still stronger than before, and bearing equally the impress of a vivid personal recollection, perhaps that of Peter. As it was there said (2, 2) that they filled the house till there was no room even at the door, so here we read of a throng so vast and constant that *they* (i. e. Jesus and his company) *were not even* (*μήτε*) *able to eat bread*, a common idiomatic phrase for taking food, especially appropriate where this consisted chiefly of bread. The meaning is, not that they did not eat at all, but that their regular repasts were interrupted, and the arrangements of the household thrown into confusion, by the constant presence of a fluctuating multitude, coming and going all day long. (Compare Acts 27, 21. 33.) This shows that the general excitement of the public

mind, occasioned by Christ's miracles and teaching, had not yet reached its height, or at least had not begun to subside.

21. And when his friends heard (of it), they went out to lay hold on him : for they said, He is beside himself.

Another trace of vivid recollection, on the part of an eye-witness, may be found in Mark's exclusive statement of the way in which the Saviour's growing popularity affected some of those connected with him. This interesting statement is extremely brief and the meaning of its terms disputed. The common version of the first clause, *his friends* (margin, *or kinsmen*) is a conjectural but probably correct interpretation of a phrase (*οἱ παρ' αὐτῷ*) which literally means *those from him* (or *from with him*.) Some explain this as meaning *those about him*, i. e. his disciples or the multitude ; but this confounds the Greek phrase with another altogether different (*οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν*) which occurs in the next chapter (see below, on 4, 10, and compare 9, 14.) Besides, why should those about him *go out* to him ? Another meaning, more agreeable to usage, is that of *sent by* (*coming from*) him (as in 14, 43 below) ; but this would be a message to himself and a command to seize himself. The only other sense that can be reconciled at once with usage and the context is that of *belonging to*, which, although rare, is not without example in the Greek of Xenophon, as well as that of the New Testament. For an instance in the book before us, see below, on 5, 26, to which some add Luke 10, 7 ; but the meaning there is rather, what proceeds from (or is furnished by) them. Both senses may, however, be reduced to one original idea, that of coming from, which is appropriate both to gifts and to extraction or descent, from which it might be readily transferred to kindred or relationship in general, thus confirming the correctness of the marginal translation in the English Bible. The same essential meaning may be gained, perhaps more simply, by understanding *from him* to mean from his family or home, not his actual dwelling in Capernaum, but his former residence in Nazareth (see above, on 1, 9), where his nearest relatives still lived. The phrase would then be nearly equivalent to *his brethren*, as used in John 7, 3. 5. But whatever be the origin of the expression, it is now very commonly agreed, that it denotes those connected with him either by natural affinity or previous acquaintance, as distinguished from his followers and disciples as a public teacher. *Went (or came) out* may, consistently with usage, mean no more than that they went forth, put themselves in motion, or addressed themselves to action. (See above, on 1, 38. 3, 6. and below, on 4, 3. 5, 14. 6, 12. 8, 11. 14, 16. 16, 20.) But in all the alleged examples of this vague sense, the original and strict one is at least included, and is therefore here entitled to the preference. Thus understood, *came out* can only mean from home, or from the place where they then were, either in Capernaum or Nazareth. If the latter, which agrees best with the explanation of *those from him* as denoting his relations, what is here said cannot be confined to the very day of his

return to Capernaum, but a certain interval of time must be supposed to have elapsed between his arrival and the one here mentioned. The object of this going out was to *seize*, or, as the older English versions phrase it, *hold him*, and the reason which they gave for this, that he was *beside himself*; or out of his natural and normal state of mind or body. The Greek verb is the same employed above (2, 12) to signify extreme amazement, but intrinsically applicable to any derangement or disorder, whether bodily or mental, and actually used by the classics and Josephus, with the noun *mind* or *senses* ( $\phi\mu\epsilon\nu\omega\nu$ ), to denote insanity, in which sense Paul elliptically makes use of the verb alone (2 Cor. 5, 13.) Some interpreters prefer the sense of bodily exhaustion, and suppose these friends to have gone out, either to sustain (support) him, or to hold him back from such injurious exertion. It is commonly agreed, however, that the reference is to mental disorder or extreme excitement. But even this has been strangely understood by some as relating to the multitude, *for they* (his friends) *said that it* (the multitude) *was mad*, and would destroy him. But this construction of the singular verb, without any thing to point out a collective subject, is so unnatural and forced, that almost all interpreters agree in referring it to Christ himself. The meaning then is that his friends, alarmed at the increasing agitation of the public mind, and the incessant labours of our Lord himself, went out to seize him or secure his person, either really believing, or at least alleging as a pretext, that he knew not what he did, and must be put under restraint for his own safety. This, unless a mere pretence designed to cloak some evil motive, does not necessarily imply a total unbelief of his pretensions, but only an imperfect view of them, and a deficiency of faith in their validity, a very natural and intelligible state of mind, at this stage of the history, and on the part of those whose spiritual or religious feelings were less strong and well-defined than their natural affections or humanity. It is introduced here as an interesting trait in the historical picture of the Saviour's ministry, with its effects on various classes both of friends and enemies. It is not, however, a mere isolated fact, but is connected with the similar account in vs. 31-35 below, from which it is divided by an interesting and important statement of the influence exerted by our Lord's proceeding, at the same time, on a very different class of men, to wit, his envious and malignant adversaries, not in the lowest but the highest ranks.

22. And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem, said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

Mark's design being here simply to illustrate the effect of our Lord's growing popularity on friends and foes, he now proceeds to give an instance of the latter kind, without describing its historical occasion, which has been preserved by Matthew (12, 22, 23) and Luke (11, 14.) Like his first recorded conflict with the Scribes (see above, on 2, 3-12) this new and worse attack was occasioned by a signal miracle, the heal-

ing of a deaf and dumb demoniac, which not only caused great wonder, but suggested the inquiry whether this might not be the Messiah (Isai. 35, 5. Matt. 12, 23.) This intimation, perhaps the first which had been uttered publicly, except by evil spirits (see above, on 1, 24. 34), would of course arouse the jealousy and party-spirit of those leading Jews, whose influence and credit must be weakened, if not utterly destroyed, by the verification of this popular idea. These feelings were accordingly expressed, and in a way to show the strength of their malignant opposition. The speakers are described by Luke (11, 15) as some of the multitude by whom the miracle was witnessed ; by Matthew (12, 14) more definitely as the Pharisees, or members of the rigorous Jewish party (see above, on 2, 16. 18) ; but by Mark still more precisely, as *the scribes who had come down from Jerusalem*, perhaps on hearing of our Lord's return from his itinerant labours to Capernaum. The expression is too definite to be explained of a mere accidental presence, or a coming down on other business. Nor is it in the least unlikely, that the general agitation and excitement of the public mind by Christ's extraordinary words and works had now alarmed the rulers of the Jewish church, and led them to regard it as a public question of the highest national importance. This is rendered still more probable by John's account of the proceedings in the case of John the Baptist, when a deputation went into the wilderness to ask him whether he was the Messiah (John 1, 19. 24.) The very answer which they then received (ib. 27, 28) must have made them more solicitous and watchful against new pretenders to the Messianic office. It is highly important to remember that our Lord did not appear abruptly on the scene as a new personage, entirely unconnected with the previous history of Israel, but claimed, first tacitly and then more openly, to be the great deliverer promised in the ancient Scriptures, and for ages looked for by the chosen people. Hence the growing agitation which his ministry occasioned was not regarded as a transient popular disturbance, but as the beginning of a national and spiritual revolution. But although the motive was the same in either case, the course now taken by the leading Jews was not entirely the same with that before adopted. Then, the messengers were sent directly to John, and demanded categorically who he was, or what he claimed to be (John 1, 19.) Now, they are merely sent to watch our Lord's proceedings, and if possible to stem the mighty current of opinion which was setting in his favour, by insidious suggestion or malignant slander. Then, the persons sent were priests and Levites ; now they are only scribes, but in both cases Pharisees, and sent directly from Jerusalem (compare John 1, 19. 24.) It is possible, indeed, that even in the other point, though not expressly mentioned here, the deputations were alike ; for as the Scribes, as the traditional expounders of the law, were mostly if not always Pharisees (see above, on 1, 22. 2, 16), so they were no doubt often, if not usually, priests or Levites, as the sacerdotal tribe was specially entrusted with the conservation and interpretation of the law (Lev. 10, 11. Deut. 24, 8. 2 Chr. 15, 3. 35, 3. Neh. 8, 7. Jer. 18, 18. Ez. 7, 26. Mal. 2, 7.) It is a serious error to suppose that these descriptive titles are exclusive of each

other, and denote so many independent classes, whereas they only denote different characters or relations, which might all meet in one and the same person, as being at the same time a priest and levite by descent and sacred office, a scribe by profession, and a pharisee in sentiment and party-connection. These scribes who had come down from Jerusalem, unable to deny the fact of the miraculous healing, used the only other means at their disposal to discredit him who wrought it, by malignantly accusing him of impious collusion with the very demons whom he dispossessed. This, while it shows their growing enmity and malice, also proves the weakness of their cause, and the reality of Christ's miraculous achievements, which they surely would have questioned if the evidence had not been overwhelming. Their very charge against him, therefore, may be reckoned as involuntary testimony to the truth of his pretensions to a superhuman power ; and their failure or refusal to acknowledge this as an abundant confirmation of his Messianic claims can only be ascribed to their infatuation and judicial blindness (see above, on v. 6, and compare Luke 6, 11.) *He hath Beelzebul*, or as it is written in all Greek manuscripts, *Beelzebul*. The latter is either a euphonic or fortuitous corruption of the former, or an intentional derisive change, like that of *Sychem* into *Sychar* (John 4, 5.) On the latter supposition it is commonly explained as meaning *Dung-god*, an expression of contempt for Beelzebul, the *Fly-god* of the Philistines (2 Kings 1, 2, 3, 6), either so called as protecting his worshippers from noxious insects, or as being himself worshiped under an insect form. This contemptuous description of a heathen deity is perfectly agreeable to Jewish usage, and its application in the case before us a conclusive proof of the extreme to which these scribes had carried their contempt and hatred of the Saviour, when they chose the grossest nickname of a false god to describe the unseen power by whose aid he wrought his miracles. *He hath Beelzebul*, i. e. he has him in possession, a remarkable antiphrasis, in which the mutual relation of the parties seems to be inverted ; just as we sometimes speak of a man's having or taking a disease, and sometimes of his being seized or attacked by it. So the same essential meaning is expressed by saying that a man has a devil, and that he is possessed by a devil ; the prominent idea in the one case being simply that of presence, in the other that of power and control. The man has the evil spirit in or with him ; but the evil spirit has the man under him, or under his dominion. This preliminary statement is omitted by the other two evangelists (Matt. 12, 24. Luke 11, 15), or blended with Mark's next clause. *In the prince (or chief) of the demons he casts out the demons*. The preposition (*in*, not *by*) denotes not mere alliance or assistance, but the most intimate personal union, such as existed in all cases of possession (see above, on 1, 23.32.) 'It is by virtue of his union and identification with the ruler of the demons that he casts them out.' The word translated *prince* is properly a participle, meaning one who goes first, takes the lead, presides, or governs. As a noun, it denotes magistrates in general, and in Grecian history the *Archons*, or chief magistrates of Athens. It is applied in the New Testament to Moses, as the national leader (Acts 7, 35), to members of the Sanhe-

drim or national council (John 3, 1. 7, 50), and to the local elders or rulers of the synagogue (Luke 8, 41), but also to the Evil One, or leader of the fallen angels, as the “prince of this world” (John 12, 31. 14, 30. 16, 11), as the “prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2, 2), and as the “prince of the devils” (Matt. 9, 34, and here.) This last word is an inexact translation, as the Scriptures recognize only one *Devil*, but a multitude of *demons* (see below, on 5, 9. 15.) The former is one of the names given to the Evil One by way of eminence, as the slanderer or false accuser of mankind, whereas *Satan* represents him as their enemy or adversary. (See above, on 1, 13, and below, on vs. 23, 26.) The other term, commonly translated *devils*, is properly an adjective, and originally means *divine*, or rather *superhuman*, comprehending all degrees and kinds of gods belonging to the Greek mythology, but specially applied to those of an inferior rank, and bearing some particular relation to individual men as their good or evil *genius*, in which sense Xenophon employs it to describe the tutelary monitor of Socrates. It is perhaps on account of this specific usage of the word that it is used in the New Testament to designate the fallen angels, or evil spirits, as connected with the history of our race, and especially as active in those singular affections which derive from them the name of “demonic possessions.” Of these *demonia* or *demons*, Satan, the Devil, is here called the prince or chief, but under the derisive and disgusting name *Beelzebul*, or *Dung-god*. It is a possible, though not a necessary supposition, that this application of the name was customary and familiar. It is more probable, however, as we do not find it in the oldest Jewish books now extant, that it was devised for the occasion, as a bitter sarcasm against Jesus, whom it virtually represents as united in the closest manner to the most unclean of spirits, and by his authority and power dispossessing his inferior agents. This view of the matter is important, as implying a terrific aggravation of the sin committed by these Scribes and Pharisees in representing the immediate acts of God as operations not of Satan merely, but of Beelzebul, which, though applied to the same being, is peculiarly insulting, as it identifies him with the Fly-god of the old Philistines, and the Dung-god into which this idol had been changed by the bitterness of Jewish controversial satire.

23. And he called them (unto him), and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan ?

Without as yet adverting to this odious aggravation of their calumny, our Lord refutes the charge itself, by showing its absurdity on any principle of action, whether human or Satanic. The Jews believed, and justly, that the Devil was not a mere chance opponent or occasional adversary of our race, but one whose vast capacity was wholly occupied in this great warfare ; who, so far as his own wishes went, existed only for the purpose of destroying man and defeating his deliverer. They were familiar with the *protevangelium*, the primeval promise or prediction of a fluctuating and protracted conflict between two antagonistic races, represented by their several heads, Christ and Satan. To sup-

pose that either party in this war of ages could mistake or change sides, was a paradox too gross to need any refutation but a simple exposure of it in its nakedness ; and this is all that the Redeemer here does. It is not a formal argument, as some assume, and then decry it as illogical and inconclusive ; it is merely a statement of the charge in its true meaning, and in comparison with what they all believed and were ready to acknowledge. As this mode of reasoning rested on relations and analogies which needed only to be hinted at without amplification or elaborate discussion, the evangelist naturally says that *he spake to them in parables*, i. e. by similitudes, comparisons, analogies, and not by syllogisms or dogmatic propositions. *Calling them to him*, i. e. those who had uttered this malignant charge, and whom he now singles out from among the multitude, and as it were challenges either to establish or retract it. *How can Satan cast out Satan?* This simple question contains the sum of the whole refutation. It implies, as previous questions, who is Satan ? What is the meaning of the very name ? What relation does it necessarily denote ? How can the adversary be a friend ? How can the leader of one party, in a war which has been going on for ages, be the ally of his enemy and conqueror ? Christ came avowedly, as well as really, to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3, 8), not as an incidental or collateral effect, but as the very object of his work and mission. Of this mission the credentials were his miracles. Of these miracles the most convincing were his dispossessions. To suppose that Satan would corroborate these strongest proofs of Christ's superiority, was not only to deny him the sagacity and cunning which belong to his whole nature as the arch-deceiver and the actual seducer of mankind, but to ignore the history of men and devils since the fall of our first parents. The Saviour's question, therefore, is equivalent to saying, 'the Evil One is called Satan, because he is essentially and always the adversary of the human race, whose nature I have taken, and of whom I am the head and representative, and am to be the Saviour and Redeemer ; to suppose that we are in collusion, therefore, is like confounding life and death, or light and darkness.'

24. And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

He illustrates this from human experience, where analogous relations exist, and like causes produce like effects, on a small as well as on a great scale. The first illustrative comparison is taken from *a kingdom*, a state, a body politic, implying not a mere aggregation of men, but organic life and unity of principle and interest. The fact alleged is not that all intestine strife or division is destructive to a state, which is not universally or always true, but that a state which wars against itself, so far as in it lies, contributes to its own destruction. If such a policy in human kingdoms would be justly reckoned suicidal, and at variance with the end for which the state exists, how can that which would be folly in a human sovereign be imputed to the most astute and crafty, as well as the most spiteful and malignant being in the universe ?

The argument involved in this comparison is not merely that the course supposed would be injurious, or ruinous, and therefore Satan cannot be supposed to take it, but that it would be self-contradictory and foolish, and at variance with the very end for which he has been plotting and deceiving since the world began. He is not too good to pursue such a course, but he is far too cunning. *That kingdom*, one thus divided and at war against itself, *cannot stand*, a more significant expression in Greek, because the form is passive, and although in usage substituted for the active, still retaining something of its proper force, and therefore suggesting the idea, that it cannot be established, made to stand, by such a process. The use of this expression shows still further, that the reference is not so much to strife between the subjects of a kingdom, which may sometimes be essential to its welfare, but to its waging war against itself, the state (as such) opposing its own interests and aiming at its own destruction. Such a case may be impossible, or never really occur; but if it should, the state would be its own destroyer. So would Satan, if he should do likewise. But that he who is called Apollyon, as the destroyer of others, should attempt self-destruction, is entirely inconceivable. Among men, suicide implies an utter ignorance or disbelief of all futurity; but no such incredulity or error is conceivable in one who knows already in his own experience what it is to perish and yet continue to exist; for as to this, as well as to the being and the unity of God, "the devils also believe and tremble" (James 2, 19.)

25. And if an house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

The same thing is true within a sphere still narrower, for instance in a family or household, when not only *divided*, i. e. composed of hostile and discordant members, but *divided against itself*, i. e. arrayed as a whole, or as a body, against its own interest or existence. That this is the true point of our Lord's comparison, is shown by the circumstance that both his illustrations are derived not from the case of individuals at strife, but from communities or aggregate bodies, large or small. The only analogous case that could have been adduced from the experience of a single person, is the strange one of a man divided against himself and striving for his own destruction. But leaving this to be completed by his hearers, he proceeds in the next verse to apply what he has said already.

26. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

What is thus true of a kingdom and a household among men is no less true of Satan; for if he has risen up against himself, and been divided, he cannot (possibly be made to) stand, but has an end, or ceases to be what he is. Had the idea of division, in these various illustrations, been the simple one of some opposing others, our Lord

would no doubt have applied his argument or principle to Satan's kingdom rather than himself; but as he here presents the paradoxical idea of Satan as an individual divided into two, and one arrayed against the other, we may safely infer, that this very paradox was meant to be the point of his whole argument. If they had said, Neither man nor devil can be thus divided so as to make war upon himself, he might have answered, How absurd then upon your part to allege such a division, by accusing me of being in alliance with my opposite! If Satan could be thus divided, he would not be Satan, but would have an end.

27. No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

Having shown that their idea of collusion with Satan was at variance with the very nature and essence of Satan himself, he adds another, likewise drawn from the experience of common life, to show the conclusion which they must have drawn in an analogous case, and which they therefore should have drawn in this. When a rich man, able to protect his goods, is robbed, no one imagines he has robbed himself, but every one regards it as the work, not only of an enemy, but also of an enemy superior in power. So, too, when they saw Satan's instruments and agents dispossessed and driven out by Jesus, instead of arguing that he and Satan were in league together, they ought rather to have argued that the prince of this world was cast out and judged (John 12, 31. 16, 11), that he had met his match, or rather came in contact with his conqueror. What clearer proof could be demanded, both of Christ's superiority and enmity to Satan, than the havoc which he made of Satan's instruments and tools, to which there may be some allusion in the word translated *goods*, which properly means vessels, utensils, or implements of any kind, (see below, 11, 16, and compare Luke 17, 31. Acts 27, 17,) and may be well applied to those inferior demons of whom Satan was the prince and leader.

28. Verily, I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme.

Thus far the Lord has been refuting the absurdity of their malignant charge, without regard to its peculiarly offensive form; and as he uses the word Satan, not Beelzebub, it might appear that he intended to pass over the gross insult without further notice. But he now rebukes it, indirectly it is true, but with so awful a severity, that few can read the words and even partly understand them without shuddering. This passage, with its parallels in Luke and Matthew, has been always and unanimously reckoned one of the most shocking and alarming in the word of God; but it acquires a new solemnity and terror when considered in its true connection with what goes before, and not

as a mere insulated and detached expression of a mysterious and fearful truth. The scribes had represented him as in collusion with the devil, under an unusual and most offensive name, importing that the spirit which possessed Christ was himself an unclean, nay, a filthy spirit. Instead of formally reproving them for this unparalleled affront to himself and to the Spirit who was in him, he describes to them the nature of the sin which they had almost, if not quite, committed, and the doom awaiting it hereafter. This momentous declaration, like a sentence of death, opens with a solemn formula of affirmation. *Amen*, here translated *verily* (or *truly*), is a Hebrew adjective, originally meaning *sure* or *certain*, but employed as an ejaculatory particle of assent or concurrence, at the close or in the intervals of prayers, benedictions, curses, vows, or other forms of a religious kind, when uttered by one or more persons in the name of others. (Num. 5, 22. Deut. 27, 15. 1 Kings 1, 36. 1 Chr. 16, 36. Ps. 106, 48. Jer. 28, 6. Matt. 6, 13. 1 Cor. 14, 16. Rev. 5, 14. 22, 20.) But besides these cases, and some others where the word is retained without translation, there are many more in which it is translated *verily*, and stands not at the end but the beginning of a sentence. This is one of the most marked characteristics of our Saviour's manner which have been preserved to us, especially by John, who always writes it twice, a form not found in any of the other gospels. In the case before us, as in others, it invites attention to the following words as uttered on divine authority, and therefore truth itself. The same idea is often expressed in the Old Testament by a divine oath. *I say unto you* is an expressive formula, too often overlooked as pleonastic; but containing two emphatic pronouns. I, the Son of God, and yet the Son of man, declare to you, my spiteful enemies and false accusers. *All the sins shall be remitted to the sons of men*, the members of the human race, not all the sins of every individual, but every kind of sin to some one. There is no sin (with the subsequent exception) so enormous that it shall not be forgiven to some sinner who commits it. What is thus said of sin in general, is then said of a single class of sins, among the most appalling that can be committed or conceived of, and the *blasphemies whatever* (i. e. however great or many that) *they may blaspheme* (see above, on 2, 7.) This is specified, not merely to enforce the previous declaration by applying it to sins directly against God, and in the last degree insulting to him, but also to connect it with the case in hand, or the occasion on which it was uttered.

29. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.

Now follows the mysterious and terrible exception. *Whoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath not remission (or forgiveness) to eternity, but is subject (or obnoxious) to eternal judgment.* The common version of the second clause (*hath never forgiveness*), though impressive and substantially correct, obscures the antithesis between the cognate noun and adjective (*aīw̄na* and *aīw̄niov*). The former properly

denotes *duration*, sometimes definite, as an age, a lifetime, or a dispensation, but, when limited by nothing in the context, indefinite and even infinite duration. This strongest sense would be implied here, even if these words were not expressed, by the structure of the sentence. If some sins will be forgiven and some not, the latter must be coextensive with the former; and as those forgiven are forgiven to eternity, those unforgiven must eternally remain so. The same thing is more positively stated in the last clause. As his sin is not to be remitted, he is of course subject to eternal condemnation, i. e. actually subject or judicially subjected to it, and not merely in danger of it, as the word is inexactly rendered. This is not the meaning even in 14, 64, below, where it is used to denote guilt or ill-desert, as necessarily inferring condemnation and execution, here included in the one word *judgment*. Even *sin*, the reading now adopted by the critics, must be taken in the same improper sense of *punishment*.

### 30. Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

Lest there should be any doubt as to the bearing of this fearful sentence, Mark specifically mentions what occasioned it, only exchanging the name *Beelzebub* for *unclean spirit*, which is really its meaning. It appears then that in charging him with being thus possessed, they either did commit, or were in danger of committing, the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. It cannot consist therefore in mere obstinate unbelief or final impenitence, for these are chargeable on all who perish, and could not be described in such terms as a peculiar sin distinguished from all others, and according to Matthew (12. 31), even from the sin of speaking a word against the Son of God. There are two other explanations which have been extensively received and are entitled to attention. One of these is founded upon Matthew's statement, and supposes a distinction between Jesus, as the Son of man, i. e. a divine person in the form of a servant (Phil. 2, 7), and under that disguise liable to be mistaken, so that men might speak against him and blaspheme him, not indeed without aggravated guilt, but without incurring this tremendous condemnation; and on the other hand Jesus, as the Son of God, with the manifest tokens of divinity afforded by his miracles of mercy. But as this does not account for the Holy Spirit being put in opposition to the Son of man, and as Mark omits this opposition altogether, most interpreters agree that the unpardonable sin consists in obstinate rejection of the truth, and wilful apostasy from God, in opposition to one's own convictions, and with malignant hatred of the gospel, the expression of which is the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, as the illuminating Spirit by whom truth is carried home to the heart and understanding of believers, and to whom such apostasy and unbelief are therefore more especially insulting.

### 31. There came then his brethren and his mother, and standing without sent unto him, calling him.

*Then* is not an adverb of time (*τότε*) but a logical connective (*οὖν*), often rendered *therefore* (as in 10, 9, 12, 6, 23, 27, 37, 13, 35), and sometimes (when preceded by *μέν*) *so then*, when an interrupted narrative or argument is resumed and continued. This is probably the meaning of the particle in this case, where it seems to connect the incident that follows with something in the foregoing context, as in our colloquial phrases, ‘well (or so then), as I was saying.’ The retrospective reference must be to the statement in v. 21, that his own friends or relatives came out to secure his person, thinking him beside himself. Having been led by a natural association under divine guidance to give some account of the effect produced by Christ’s increasing popularity upon his most malignant enemies (22–30), the writer now returns to the effect upon his friends, especially those nearest to him. This view of the connection throws some light upon the conduct of his mother and his brethren, in disturbing him while publicly engaged in teaching. That they would venture to do so without a reason, or on ordinary business, or from personal affection, or from pride in their connection with him, although not impossible, is far less probable than that they were actuated by an anxious care for his own safety, and called for him in order to arrest what they regarded as a wild and dangerous excitement, both on his part and on that of the assembled masses. It may be difficult for us, with our habitual associations, to appreciate the motives of these anxious friends; but at the juncture here described, nothing could be more natural and pardonable than precisely such solicitude, which is perfectly compatible with true faith and affection, but imperfect views both of his person and his mission. The principal actor in this scene is his mother, the brothers merely following or attending her, but joining in her message and request. It has been a subject of dispute for ages, whether these brothers of our Lord were sons of Joseph and Mary, or of Joseph by a former wife, or nephews of either, all which hypotheses have been maintained by high authorities. Some of the questions in relation to this topic will recur below (on 6, 3), and some of them belong rather to the exposition of Matthew (1, 25.) All that is necessary here is to observe that they were certainly his near relations, and either by birth or by adoption members of his mother’s family, so that they constantly attended her and acted with her upon this occasion. *Without*, either outside of the house, or more probably beyond the circle of his hearers in the open air. *Sent to him*, no doubt by passing the message from man to man until it reached him, which they could not do themselves from the extent and pressure of the crowd. *Calling him* (or *for him*) might appear to be a peremptory summons, but for the milder statement of Luke (8, 20), that they wished to see him, and of Matthew (12, 46, 47), that they sought to speak to him. This last evangelist connects the incident expressly with the same discourse that here precedes it, but with a part of that discourse which Mark has not reported, and which Luke gives in a different connection (11, 24–36.)

32. And the multitude sat about him ; and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

The emphatic word here is not *sat* but *multitude*. Their posture was of no importance, even as a vivid recollection of a witness ; but it was important to observe that he was in the midst of *a crowd* (not *the crowd*), to explain why his friends did not speak to him directly but through others. *They said*, i. e. one to another, till the nearest finally reported it to Jesus (Matt. 12, 47.) There is no ground therefore for the singular idea, that this person wished to interrupt our Lord's discourse as too alarming (Matt. 12, 39-45), by directing his attention to his friends who were present and inquiring for him.

33. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren ?

Our Lord takes occasion from this incident to teach them that his relative position in society was wholly different from that of others, his domestic ties, though real, being as nothing in comparison with those which bound him to his spiritual household. This is the meaning of the question here recorded. 'Do you think that my condition is the same as yours, and that the wishes of my mother and my brothers are as binding upon me as those of your own households are and ought to be on you ?' There is no doubt an implied negation of the proposition thus suggested, as if he had said, You are mistaken in supposing that my family relations are the same as yours, or that my mother and brothers are what you express by those endearing names. The contemptuous meaning put by some upon the words, as if he had intended to say, What are they to me ? or what care I for them ? is wholly foreign from the text and context.

34. And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren !

Here again Mark has preserved to us a look or gesture of our Lord, not mentioned by the others. *Looking round in a circle*, that is, turning quite round, so as to survey the whole assembly, not (as in v. 5, above) with grief and anger, but no doubt with an affectionate and tender recognition of his true friends and disciples. *See, behold, (these are) my mother and my brothers*, i. e. my family and nearest kindred. I am not bound, as you are, to a single household, but embrace, as equally allied and dear to me, this vast assembly.

35. For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

Lest this comprehensive statement should lead any to imagine that mere outward attendance on his teaching would entitle them to this

distinction, he emphatically adds, that it belonged to none but those who acted out as well as listened to his doctrine. It was only he who did the will of God, as Christ announced it, that could claim the honour of this near relationship. But where this condition was complied with, even the poorest and most ignorant, and in themselves the most unworthy of his hearers, were as truly members of his household, and as affectionately cherished by him, as his highly favoured mother, who was blessed among women (Luke 1, 28), or his brothers and his sisters according to the flesh. This delightful assurance, far from abjuring his natural relations, only makes them a standard of comparison for others. Far from saying that he does not love his mother and his brethren, he declares that he has equal love for all who do the will of God. Such a profession from a mere man might be justly understood as implying a deficiency of natural affection, since so wide a diffusion of the tenderest attachments must detract from their intensity within a narrow sphere. Of Christ alone can it be literally true, that while he loved those nearest to him with a love beyond all human experience or capacity, and with precisely the affection due to each beloved object, he embraced with equal tenderness and warmth the thousands who composed his spiritual household, and will continue so to do forever. The implied reproof of his friends' interference with his sacred functions, was intended only for themselves. What he said to the multitude, instead of disparaging his natural relations, magnified and honoured them by making them the measure of his spiritual friendships; and even if he meant to say that those who did the will of God were the only relatives whom he acknowledged, he must still have given a high place among them to his mother, notwithstanding her anxieties on his behalf, and to his brothers also, if believers. (Compare John 7, 5.)

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## CHAPTER IV.

HAVING shown how Christ prepared the way for the re-organization of the Church, by choosing and training men who should effect it, Mark now describes the other part of this preparatory process, which consisted in our Lord's own exposition of the nature of his kingdom, and the principles on which it was to be established. Though he does not give the principal discourse of this kind (commonly called the Sermon on the Mount), he exemplifies the Saviour's method of promoting the same end by parables, of which this chapter gives three specimens. The first, and much the longest, shows that his kingdom was to be erected in the hearts of men, and the various receptions which it would there meet with (1-25.) The second teaches that, although this kingdom was to be established in and among men, and with their co-operation, its success was to be wholly independent of their will and efforts (26-29.)

The third illustrates its expansive nature, and the divine will with respect to its diffusion (30-32.) To these three parables, all derived from agricultural experience, Mark adds a general statement as to our Saviour's use of this mode of instruction (33, 34.) The remainder of the chapter is occupied with the account of a new miracle, different from any one before recorded, and connected chronologically with the parables by which it is preceded in the narrative (35-41.) It is still observable, however, here as in the former chapters, that the order of time is altogether subordinated to the purpose of exhibiting the method and effects of our Lord's ministry.

1. And he began again to teach by the sea-side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea, on the land.

Like Luke (8, 4) and Matthew (13, 1), Mark records, as a sort of epoch or important juncture in his history, the beginning of our Saviour's parabolical instructions, as a part of the preparatory process by which he contributed to the reorganization of the Church, although he did not actually make the change during his personal presence upon earth, because, as we have seen, it was to rest upon his death and resurrection as its corner-stone. The other part of his preparatory work consisted in the choice and education of the men by whom the change was to be afterwards effected. (See above, on 1, 16. 2, 13.) *Began*, as in 1, 45. 2, 23, is not superfluous, but indicates the opening of some new series or process, which was to be afterwards continued. *Again*, on the other hand, suggests that this was not the commencement of his teaching ministry, but only of one form of it. He had already taught the people publicly with great effect (see above, on 1, 22), but now began to teach them in a peculiar manner, with a special purpose to elucidate the nature of his kingdom, for the benefit of those who were to be his subjects, but without a too explicit and precipitate disclosure of his claim to the Messiahship. *By the sea-side*, or *along the sea*, i. e. the lake of Tiberias or Galilee (see above, on 1, 16), not only near it, but upon the very shore. *Was gathered*, or, according to the oldest text, *is gathered* (or *assembled*), a more graphic form, exhibiting the scene as actually passing. Another emendation by the latest critics is the change of the positive (*great*) to the superlative (*greatest*), either in reference to all former gatherings, or absolutely in the sense of *very great*. *Multitude*, or *crowd*, the Greek word indicating not mere numbers, but promiscuous assemblage (see above, on 2, 4. 13. 3, 9. 20. 32.) The situation is like that described in 3, 9, where we read that he directed a small vessel to be ready, if the crowd should be so great as to prevent his standing on the shore with safety or convenience. Here we find him actually *entering into* (or *embarking in*) the boat, no doubt the one already mentioned as in readiness, and *sitting in the sea*, i. e. upon the surface of the lake, while his vast audience was *on the land*.

(but) *at (or close to) the sea*, a stronger expression of proximity than that in the first clause. The scene thus presented must have been highly impressive to the eye, and still affords a striking subject for the pencil.

2. And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,

*Taught* is in the imperfect tense, and according to Greek usage properly denotes continued or habitual action, *he was teaching* or *he used to teach*. This yields a good sense, as the writer is undoubtedly describing one of our Lord's favourite and constant modes of teaching. But the use of the aorist by Matthew (13, 3) and Luke (8, 4), and the specific reference by Mark himself (in v. 1) to a particular occasion, seem to forbid the wider meaning, unless it be supposed that he made use of the imperfect (as of the verb *began*) to intimate that, although this was the first instance of such teaching, it was not the last. *Many things*, of which only samples are preserved, even by Matthew, and still fewer in the book before us, showing that the writer's aim was not to furnish an exhaustive history, but to illustrate by examples the ministry of Christ. *In parables*, i. e. in the form and in the use of them. *Parable* is a slight modification of a Greek noun, the verbal root of which has two principal meanings, to *propound* (throw out or put forth), and to *compare* (throw together or lay side by side.) The sense of the noun derived from the former usage, that of any thing propounded, is too vague to be distinctive, comprehending as it does all kinds of instruction, which, from its very nature, must be put forth or imparted from one mind to another. The more specific sense of comparison, resemblance, is not only sanctioned by the usage of the best Greek writers (such as Plato, Aristotle, and Isocrates), but recommended, not to say required, by the employment of a corresponding Hebrew word (**לִפְנֵי** from **לִפְנֵי** to resemble) in precisely the same way. In its widest sense, a *parable* is any illustration from analogy, including the simile and metaphor as rhetorical figures, the allegory, apostrophe, fable, and some forms of proverbial expression. In a more restricted sense, the word denotes an illustration of moral or religious truth derived from the analogy of human experience. In this respect it differs from the fable, which accomplishes the same end by employing the supposed acts of inferior animals, or even those ascribed to inanimate objects, to illustrate human character and conduct. The only fables found in Scripture, those of Jotham (Judg. 9, 8-15) and Joash (2 Kings 14, 9), are given on human, not divine authority. The parable, in its more restricted sense, as just explained, is not necessarily narrative in form (see above, on 2, 18-22), much less fictitious, although this is commonly assumed in modern definitions of the term. There is good reason to believe that all the parables of Christ are founded in fact, if not entirely composed of real incidents. They are all drawn from familiar forms of human experience, and with one exception from the present life. This creates a strong presumption that the facts are true,

unless there be some positive reason for supposing them fictitious. Now the necessity of fiction to illustrate moral truth arises, not from the deficiency of real facts adapted to the purpose, but from the writer's limited acquaintance with them, and his consequent incapacity to frame the necessary combinations, without calling in the aid of his imagination. But no such necessity can exist in the case of an inspired, much less of an omniscient teacher. To resort to fiction, therefore, even admitting its lawfulness on moral grounds, when real life affords in such abundance the required analogies, would be a gratuitous preference, if not of the false to the true, at least of the imaginary to the real, which seems unworthy of our Lord, or which, to say the least, we have no right to assume without necessity. In expounding the parables, interpreters have gone to very opposite extremes, but most to that of making every thing significant, or giving a specific sense to every minute point of the analogy presented. This error is happily exposed by Augustine, when he says, that the whole plough is needed in the act of ploughing, though the ploughshare alone makes the furrow, and the whole frame of an instrument is useful, though the strings alone produce the music. The other extreme, that of overlooking or denying the significance of some things really significant, is much less common than the first, and for the most part found in writers of severer taste and judgment. The true mean is difficult but not impossible to find, upon the principle now commonly assumed as true, at least in theory, that the main analogy intended, like the centre of a circle, must determine the position of all points in the circumference. It may also be observed, that as the same illustration may legitimately mean more to one man than to another, in proportion to the strength of their imaginative faculties, it is highly important that, in attempting to determine the essential meaning of our Saviour's parables, we should not confound what they may possibly be made to mean, with what they must mean to attain their purpose. In addition to these principles, arising from the nature of the parable itself, we have the unspeakable advantage of our Saviour's own example as a self-interpreter. *In his doctrine*, i. e. in the act of teaching, or perhaps the meaning here may be, in this peculiar mode of teaching. (See above, on 1, 22-27.)

### 3. Hearken ; Behold, there went out a sower to sow.

Mark has preserved one introductory ejaculation, not in Luke, and one neither in Luke nor Matthew. *Hear!* implying the power and intention to communicate something particularly worthy of attention. This word, perhaps a part of Peter's vivid recollection, may be said to introduce the whole succession of our Saviour's parables. *Behold!* (1 Matt. 13, 3), lo, see, in one or two specific cases, but intended, no doubt, as a model and a guide in others (see below, on vs. 10-20), both in Hebrew and Hellenistic usage, introduces something unexpected and surprising. Some take it even in its primary and strict sense, look ! see there ! implying that the object indicated was in sight or actually visible ; in other words, that Christ was led to use this illus-

tration by the casual appearance of a sower in a neighbouring field ; and this is often represented as the usual occasion of his parabolic teachings. It seems, however, to regard them as too purely accidental, and too little the result of a deliberate predetermination, such as we cannot but assume in the practice of a divine teacher. A safer form of the same proposition is the one already stated in a different connection (see above, on v. 1), namely, that our Saviour's parables, though not invariably suggested by immediate sights or passing scenes, are all derived from the analogy of human experience, and in most instances of common life. Thus the three here given by Mark are designed not only to exhibit different aspects of the same great subject, the Messiah's kingdom, but to exhibit them by means of images derived from one mode of life or occupation, that of husbandry, with which his auditors were all familiar, and in which, most probably, the greater part of them were constantly engaged. But besides these objections to the general supposition that our Saviour's parables were all suggested casually, such an assumption is forbidden in the case before us by the form of expression used by all these evangelists with striking uniformity. It is not as it naturally would be on the supposition now in question, *See, a sower goes (or going) out*, but with the article, and in the aorist or past tense, *lo, the sower went out*. *The sower*, like *the Fox* and *the Lion* in a fable, is generic, meaning the whole class, or an ideal individual who represents it. *Went out*, as we say in colloquial narrative, once upon a time, the precise date being an ideal one because the act is one of constant occurrence. As if he had said, 'a sower went out to sow, as you have often done and seen your neighbour do.' *To sow*, distinguishes his going out for this specific purpose from his going out on other errands. The sower went out as such, as a sower, to perform the function which the name denotes.

4. And it came to pass as he sowed, some fell by the way-side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

*It came to pass*, or something happened, implying something not indeed uncommon, but yet not belonging as of course to the process of sowing seed. *As he sowed*, literally, *in the (act of) sowing*, and therefore in the field, not merely on the way to it. *By the way* must therefore mean *along the path* trodden by the sower himself and hardened by his footsteps, not along the highway leading to his place of labour. This idea is distinctly expressed by Luke (8, 5), and it was trodden down, i. e. it fell upon the path where he was walking. *Some* is understood by every reader to mean some of the seed which he was sowing, the noun, although not previously mentioned as it is in Luke (8, 4), being necessarily suggested by the kindred verb, *to sow, in sowing*. The principal circumstance in this part of the parable is not the treading of the seed, which Luke only adds to specify the place, but its lying exposed upon the trodden path, and there devoured by the birds. *Fowl*, now confined to certain species of domesticated birds, is co-exten-

sive in old English with *bird* itself. *Of the air, literally of heaven,* a Hebrew idiom, according to which *heaven* (or *heavens*, see above on 1, 10), is applied, not only to the whole material universe, except the earth (Gen. 1, 1) and especially to that part of it regarded as the more immediate residence of God (Gen. 19, 24), but also to the visible expanse or firmament (Gen. 1, 14), and to our atmosphere, or rather to the whole space between us and the heavenly bodies (Gen. 1, 20.) The version, therefore, is substantially correct, supposing these words (*τὸν οὐρανὸν*) to be genuine; but the latest critics have expunged them as a probable assimilation to the text of Luke (8, 5): nothing more is here intended by the phrase than *birds* in general, or *the birds* which his hearers well knew were accustomed to commit such depredations. The familiarity of this occurrence, and of those which follow, must have brought the illustration home to the business and bosoms of the humblest hearers, and, at the same time, necessarily precludes the idea of a fiction, when real facts were so abundant and accessible. It is idle to object that this particular sower never did go forth, when the opposite assertion can as easily be made, and when the terms employed, as we have seen, may designate the whole class of sowers, including multitudes of individuals, or any of these whom any one of the hearers might select as particularly meant, perhaps himself, perhaps some neighbouring husbandman. Such a use of language, when applied to incidents of every-day occurrence, is as far as possible remote from fiction.

5. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:

*Another* (seed, or portion of the seed sown) fell upon *the stony* (or rocky soil), collective singulars equivalent to Matthew's plurals (13, 5.) The reference is not to loose or scattered stones (see below, on 5, 5), but to a thin soil overspreading a stratum or layer of concealed rock. *Immediately*, here used by Matthew also, is emphatic, the rapid germination being a material circumstance, and seemingly ascribed to the shallowness of the soil, allowing the seed no room to strike deep root, but only to spring upwards. The same idea is suggested by the verb itself, a double compound meaning to *spring up and forth*. The cause assigned by Luke (8, 6), is not that of the speedy germination, but of the premature decay that followed it, as Mark describes more fully in the next verse.

6. But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

*When the sun was up* (or *risen*), is the literal translation of the text adopted by the latest critics, while the common or received text, though the same in meaning, has a different construction, *the sun having risen*. There is a peculiar beauty in the Greek here, which cannot be

retained in a translation, arising from the use of the same verb (but in a less emphatic form) to signify the rising of the plant and of the sun, as both are said in English to be *up*, when one is above the surface of the earth and the other above the horizon. *Scorched* (or *burnt*) and withered (or *dried*, see above, on 3, 1), are different effects ascribed to different causes. The first is the evaporation of the vital sap or vegetable juices by the solar heat; the other their spontaneous failure from the want of a tenacious root. Together they describe, in a manner at once accurate and simple, the natural and necessary fate of a plant without sufficient depth of soil, however quick and even premature its vegetation.

7. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

*Another*, as in v. 5. *Into the thorns*, or in the midst of them, as it is more fully expressed by Luke (8, 7.) *The thorns*, which happened to be growing there, or which are usually found in such situations. *Came up*, appeared above the surface, an expression constantly employed in English to denote the same thing. *Choked*, stifled, or deprived of life by pressure. This word, though strictly applicable only to the suffocation of animal or human subjects (see Luke 8, 42), is here by a natural and lively figure transferred to the fatal influence on vegetable life of too close contact with a different and especially a ranker growth. Matthew (13, 7) uses a still more emphatic compound of the same verb, corresponding to our own familiar phrase *choked off*. And *fruit did not give*, though implied in all, is expressed only in Mark's account, which throughout this parable exhibits no appearance of abridgment.

8. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up, and increased, and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.

*Another*, as in vs. 5. 7. It is a minute but striking proof that the evangelists wrote independently of each other, and that their coincidence of language arose not from mutual imitation, but from sameness of original material, that in these three verses Matthew always says *upon* (*ἐπι*), Mark *into* or *among* (*εἰς*.) *Good ground*, in Greek, *the earth, the good, earth or soil* properly so called in distinction from the beaten, rocky, thorny places before mentioned. *Gave fruit coming up and growing*, the fruit or ripe grain being represented as passing through the changes which are really experienced in the earlier stages of the vegetable process. *Bore*, the same idea that was before expressed by *gave*, the latter having more explicit reference to the use and wants of men, the former to production in itself considered. What the seed *bore*, whether reaped or not, it *yielded* only on the former supposition. *One*, i. e. one seed, the proportion stated being that of the seed sown to the ripe grain harvested. As the Greek nu-

meral (*εν*) here rendered *one* is distinguished from the preposition *in* (*ἐν*) by nothing but its accent and its aspiration, which are not given in the oldest copies, one distinguished modern critic substitutes the latter, *in thirty and in sixty*, i. e. in this ratio or proportion, and another gives as the most ancient text a different preposition (*εἰς*), meaning *to* (i. e. to the amount of) *thirty, sixty, and a hundred*. The productiveness ascribed to the nutritious grains in this place is by no means unexampled either in ancient or in modern times. It is indeed a moderate and modest estimate compared with some recorded by Herodotus, in which the rate of increase was double or quadruple even the highest of the three here mentioned, and the recent harvest in our western states affords examples of increase still greater.

9. And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

This idiomatic and proverbial formula, like many others of perpetual occurrence in our Lord's discourses, is never simply pleonastic or unmeaning, as the very repetition often tempts us to imagine. On the contrary, such phrases are invariably solemn and emphatic warnings that the things in question are of the most momentous import and entitled to most serious attention. They appear to have been framed or adopted by the Saviour, to be used on various occasions and in the pauses of his different discourses. There is something eminently simple and expressive in the one before us, which involves rebuke as well as exhortation. 'Why should you have the sense of hearing, if you do not use it now? To what advantage can you ever listen, if you turn a deaf ear to these admonitions? Now, now, if ever, he who can hear must hear, or incur the penalty of inattention!' But besides the importance of the subject and the juncture, it is here suggested that the very form of the communication calls for close attention, in default of which it can impart no knowledge and confer no benefit.

\* This may be understood as having reference to the parabolic method of instruction which our Saviour now began and afterwards continued to employ so freely. (See below, on v. 11.)

10. And when he was alone, they that were about him, with the twelve, asked of him the parable.

*Alone*, not absolutely but comparatively, by himself, in private, free from the pressure of the crowd, surrounded only by disciples, not in the strict sense of apostles, but in that of friendly hearers and adherents. This is clear from Mark's description, *those about him with the twelve*, i. e. those who in addition the twelve were in habitual attendance on his person, following him from place to place; or those who, upon this particular occasion, still remained about him after the dispersion of the multitude. Explained in either way, the words are probably descriptive of the same class, and imply that what now follows was addressed neither to the vast mixed multitude, nor to the

twelve apostles only, but to an intermediate body, smaller than the first and larger than the second, but composed entirely of disciples (Matt. 13, 10. Luke 8, 9) or believers in his doctrine. *Asked him of the parable*, in Greek, *asked him the parable itself*, a pregnant phrase resolved by Luke and Matthew into two distinct inquiries, first, the general one, why he taught in parables at all (Matt. 13, 10), and then, the more specific one, what this first parable was meant to teach (Luke 8, 9.) It is observable that Mark, although he gives the question in a single form, and that a vague one, gives the answers to the two inquiries really involved in it; a circumstance which all but hypercritical sceptics will regard not as discrepancy but agreement. The question thus interpreted shows that the parabolic method of instruction, as applied now for the first time to the doctrine of the kingdom, was obscure or unintelligible even to the more enlightened of our Saviour's hearers; a deficiency which furnished the occasion of his own authoritative exposition, making known not only the precise sense of the parable to which it was immediately applied, but also the more general principles and laws which are to govern the interpretation of all others.

11. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all (these) things are done in parables:

We have here the answer to the first inquiry really involved in that which Mark records (in v. 10) and more distinctly stated elsewhere (Matt. 13, 10), namely, why he spake in parables at all. In answer to this question, he informs them that a sifting, separating process had begun already and must be continued, with the unavoidable effect of throwing all his hearers into two great classes, *those within* and *those without* the magic circle of his enlightening and saving influence. The difference between these classes was not one of personal intrinsic merit, but of divine favour. *To you it has been given*, the perfect passive form, implying an authoritative predetermination, being common to all three accounts, as in our Lord's assurance to the paralytic, *Thy sins have been forgiven thee* (see above, on 2, 5.) *Given*, not conceded as a right, but granted as a favour. *To know*, i. e. directly, by explicit statement, either without the veil of parable, or with the aid of an infallible interpretation. *Mysteries*, in the usual sense of that word as employed in scripture to denote, not the intrinsic nature of the things so called, but merely their concealment from the human mind until disclosed by revelation. The mystery in this sense here particularly meant is that of the kingdom of God, to be erected by Messiah in the heart of man and of society, and to receive its final consummation in a future state of glory. The use of this expression (*of the kingdom*), common to all three accounts (see Matt. 13, 11. Luke 8, 10), is not without importance, as evincing that the parables of Christ had reference, not merely to personal duty and improvement, but to the nature of his kingdom and the mode of its establish-

ment, a reference too often overlooked or sacrificed to mere individual edification. *To those without* the sphere or scope of this illuminating influence. *All things* (*these* is omitted by the latest critics), i. e. all things of the kind in question, namely, all communications and instructions in relation to Messiah's kingdom. *Are done*, take place, happen, an expression also used by Herodotus in reference to discourse or teaching. *In parables*, obviously implying that this mode of exhibition might be used to veil and to obscure as well as to elucidate the same things, but to different hearers or spectators. This darkening influence of parabolic teaching is assumed in this place, as a fact sufficiently implied in the inquiry which our Lord was answering, and not explained till afterwards. (See below, on vs. 24, 25.)

12. That seeing they may see, and not perceive ; and hearing they may hear, and not understand ; lest at any time they should be converted, and (their) sins should be forgiven them.

Thus far it might have seemed that this obtuseness of the masses to divine instruction was a mere misfortune, having no connection with their moral character and state. But now the Saviour represents it as the consequence of sin, left by God in his righteousness to operate unchecked in one class, but gratuitously counteracted in another. The expressions here are borrowed from that fearful picture of judicial blindness in Isaiah 6, 10. Matthew's quotation (13, 14, 15) is more full and formal, Luke's (8, 10) even more concise than that of Mark. Common to all, and therefore to be reckoned the essential part of the quotation, are the words, *that seeing they might see, and hearing might not understand*. To see and not see, hear and not hear, was a paradoxical Greek proverb, used by Demosthenes and Æschylus to signify a mere external sensuous perception without intellectual or moral conviction. Luke gives it nearly in its classical form, while Mark retains the Hebrew idiom of using two forms of the same verb for intensity or more precise specification. Seeing indeed, or seeing still, continuing to see, or seeing clearly, so far as concerns the outward object. *And not perceive*, with the mind or heart. The Greek verbs might be also rendered *look* and *see*. *Hearing might hear*, i. e. distinctly, constantly, again, or still. *And not understand* (or apprehend) the things heard in their spiritual import. Mark adds from Isaiah the judicial end or purpose of their being thus abandoned, lest at any time (or some time) they should turn (to God, or, as it is passively expressed, be converted), a familiar scriptural expression for that total change of character and conduct, heart and life, which is essential to salvation. *And the sins* (of which they have been guilty) *be remitted* (left unpunished, pardoned), is the sense but not the form of the original expression, here retained by Matthew (13, 15), and representing sin as a disease, of which God heals men by forgiving them. (Compare Ps. 41, 4. Jer. 3, 22. Hos. 14, 4. 1 Pet. 2, 24.) The clause here quoted is derived, with little variation, from the Septuagint version of Isaiah.

13. And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?

*And he says to them*, a common form, especially in Mark (see above, on 3, 25. 27), to indicate a change of subject in the same discourse, or at least a transition from one part of the same topic to another. So in this case, having answered the first question latent in the statement that *they asked him (of) the parable*, to wit, the question why he spoke in parables at all (see Matt. 13, 10), he proceeds to answer the other, namely, what he meant to teach by this one in particular (see Luke 8, 9.) Before explaining it, however, he propounds a preliminary question, which has been differently understood. Some make it an expression of displeasure and surprise that they should need his explanation of so clear a matter. But as this is inconsistent with his own ascription of an obscuring power to this method of instruction (see above, on v. 11), the words are rather to be taken as a concession of the fact that they could not be expected to understand this or other parables, without at least some general idea of the principles on which they were to be expounded. As if he had said, ‘you find that you cannot understand this parable without assistance? how then will you understand the rest unaided?’ The necessity suggested is not that of a particular elucidation to be added to each parable as it was uttered, although this was often actually given (see below, on v. 34), but of a general and comprehensive key to the whole series of his parabolic teachings. Such a key might be furnished in either of two ways, by a series of general and abstract rules applying to all parables, or by a few examples setting forth the same laws in a concrete, practical, experimental manner. While the former might have met the wants or gratified the wishes of a body of philosophers, the latter was undoubtedly best suited to the actual condition and necessities of Christ’s immediate hearers; and we find accordingly that he adopts it, by expounding two of his first parables (the Sower and the Tares) upon the same day that he uttered them and in the presence of his own disciples (see above, on v. 10.) Matthew has preserved both these invaluable expositions (13, 18–23. 36–50), Mark and Luke (8, 11–15) only that of the Sower, which is sufficient of itself to teach the fundamental principles of parabolical interpretation. It is impossible to overrate the value of this clew to guide us through the labyrinth of various and discordant expositions, or its actual effect, when faithfully employed, in guarding the interpreter against the opposite extremes of meagre generality and fanciful minuteness. It was not only placed here in the history, but uttered when it was, that it might serve as an example and a model in interpreting those parables which Christ has not explained himself. Some of the errors thus forbidden and condemned, if not prevented, will be noticed in expounding the ensuing verses.

#### 14. The sower soweth the word.

Human expounders, unchecked by our Lord’s example and authority, would no doubt have begun with something more specific and

minute, such as the quantity and kind of seed, the place and mode of sowing, the significance belonging to the act of going forth, &c. But the Saviour teaches us to strike at once at the essential likeness or analogy which governs and determines all the minor correspondences. *The sower* (or one sowing) *sows the word*, i. e. the word of God (Luke 8, 11), or more specifically still, *the word* (or *doctrine, of the kingdom*) (see above, on v. 11.) This expression shows that our Lord's primary design in these instructions was not merely a generic one, including all the cases that can possibly arise in the experience of men, but a specific one, relating to the wants and dangers of his own immediate hearers, the contemporary generation, among whom the advent of Messiah and his kingdom had been lately preached, and the kingdom itself was to be founded.

15. And these are they by the way-side, where the word is sown ; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

*These are those along the way*, i. e. the characters about to be described are those whose case is represented by the falling of the seed upon the path. The incongruity, alleged by some, of making the seed represent the man, and not the word as just explained (v. 14), is a mere rhetorical punetilio, and presents no difficulty to the mind of any unbiased reader. The parable has answered its design for ages, notwithstanding this alleged flaw in its imagery, which probably occurs to none but hypercritics. *Where*, i. e. on the path and in the ears of those whose case is represented by it. *The word is sown*, a mixture of the sign and the thing signified, producing no confusion, and objectionable only on the ground of rhetorical precisionness. *When they* (the persons represented in this portion of the parable) *hear* (or *have heard*) *the word* (just represented as seed sown), *immediately comes* Satan (or the adversary), elsewhere called the Devil (Luke 8, 12), and the Evil One (Matt. 13, 19.) *Takes up and away*, in reference to the picking up of grain by birds (see above, on v. 4.) *Sown in their hearts*, another mixture of the sign and the thing signified, as harmless as the other, because after the equivalents have been determined, they become convertible without confusion. The influence here ascribed to Satan must be strictly understood as really exerted by him in the case of those who hear the word, but only as a persuasive, not a coercive power, and therefore exercised by turning the attention from the word as soon as uttered, and diverting it to other objects.

16. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground ; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness.

He now identifies the second class of fruitless and unprofitable hearers, those represented in the parable by the falling of the seed on stony

places. Here again he seems to make the seed the emblem of the man himself, and not of the word preached to him, but with as little disadvantage to the force and clearness of the illustration as before, and in the exercise of that discretionary license which distinguishes original and independent thinkers, even among mere men, from the grammarians and rhetoricians. Every ordinary reader understands without instruction that *those sown upon the rocky (places)* means those whose character and state are represented by the falling of the seed upon the rock, and not that the seed itself specifically represents the persons. *Likewise*, in the same way as before, this portion of the parable, like that preceding it, exhibits a distinct class of hearers, and the influence exerted on them by the doctrine of the kingdom. The difference between the cases is that these go further, and not only hear the word, or passively receive it, but accept it as the word of God, and that not merely with a cold assent or forced submission, but with joy, as something addressed to the affections, no less than the reason and the conscience, and received accordingly, at once, *immediately*, which, though a favourite of Mark, as we have seen above (on 1, 10. 18, 31. 40. 2, 2, 3, 6), is here attested as a genuine expression, not by his report alone, which would have been sufficient for the purpose, but by that of Matthew (13, 20.) The obvious gradation in the parable not only renders it more perfect in a literary point of view, but increases its discriminating power as applied to individual and general experience, so that every class of hearers, even now, and still more in the time of Christ, might see itself as in a mirror. Indeed, nothing shows the wisdom of our Lord's instructions more impressively than the fact, confirmed by all experience for 1800 years, and receiving further confirmation every day, that all varieties of human and religious character may be reduced to some one or more of his simple but divine descriptions.

17. And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

While the first seed was not even buried, but removed while on the surface, the second was not only sown, but came up prematurely and without a root, which same expression our Lord now applies to the class here represented, namely, those *who have no root in themselves*, i. e. what in our religious phraseology (here founded upon Job 19, 28) is called "the root of the matter," i. e. a principle of true religion, including or implying faith, repentance, and the love of God, producing an analogous external life. This shows in what sense Luke describes them (8, 13) as believing for a while, i. e. professing or appearing to believe while really without the root of true conviction and conversion. Mark expresses the same thing more concisely in a single word, *temporary*, made up of the noun and preposition here employed by Luke, and elsewhere rendered *temporal* (2 Cor. 4, 18, as opposed to *eternal*), or paraphrased, *for a season* (Heb. 11, 25.) *Then*, afterwards, or after this ostensible conversion. *Distress or persecution*, kindred but dis-

tinct terms, one originally signifying *pressure*, and the other *pursuit*, the former comprehending providential chastisements, the other denoting more specifically evils inflicted by the hands of human enemies. *For* (because or on account of) *the word*, the doctrine of Christ's kingdom, which they had so joyfully embraced, and for a time so openly maintained. *Ariseth* is in Greek an absolute construction, *being*, beginning to be, coming to pass, happening. *Immediately* again, both in Mark and Matthew (13, 21), but with a difference of form (*εἰθύσ* and *εἰθέως*), the repetition showing that the real change for the worse is as sudden and as easy as the apparent change for the better. *Offended*, not in the ordinary modern sense of being displeased or alienated in affection, but in the Latin and old English sense of stumbling or being made to stumble. The nearest root or theme to which it can be traced in classic Greek, denotes a trap or snare, but in the Hellenistic dialect a stumbling-block or any hindrance in the path, over which one may fall. In like manner the derivative verb means to make one fall or stumble, a natural figure both for sin and error, and often representing both as commonly connected in experience. Another explanation of the usage, leading to the same result, gives *offend* its modern sense, but in reference to God, to offend whom is to sin, and then takes the verb here in a causative sense, *they are made to sin*, or betrayed into sinning against God. As the sin here meant is not such as even true believers may commit, but one arising from the absence of a root in the experience, Luke (8, 13) describes it by the stronger term, *apostatize (or fall away)*, not from a previous state of grace or true conversion, which would imply the very thing explicitly denied in the preceding clause, to wit, the possession of a root, but from their ostensible and false profession.

18. And these are they which are sown among thorns ; such as hear the word,

19. And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

*And others* (or another class of fruitless hearers represented in this parable) are *those sown among the thorns*, i. e. those whose case is symbolized or emblematically set forth by the falling of a portion of the seed among thorns. The form of expression is the same as in vs. 15, 16, and is uniform in all the gospels, a sufficient proof that it is not an inadvertence or mistake of the historian, but at least in substance a deliberate expression of our Lord himself. Common to this with the other classes here described is the hearing of the word, because the very purpose of the parable is to exhibit different ways in which it may be heard with the effect upon the hearer. Some suppose the climax or gradation to be here continued, and this third class of hearers to be represented as going further than the second. But it seems more natural to make the two co-ordinate as different divisions

of the same class, i. e. of temporary converts or believers, the difference between them being not that one continues longer than the other, but that one is scandalized by violence, the other by allurement or seduction. While the former yield to *distress and persecution*, these are rendered fruitless by the cares and pleasures of the world. *Cares*, undue solicitudes, anxieties, and fears, as to the interests of this life. The corresponding verb (translated in our Bible by the old English phrase to *take thought*, i. e. to be over anxious) is applied by our Lord elsewhere in the same way (Matt. 6, 25-34. Luke 10, 41.) *Of this world* (or, according to the critics, *the world*), the same Greek word that was explained above (on 3, 29), as meaning properly *dura-tion* or continued existence, either definite or indefinite, finite or infinite, according to the context. Some suppose it here to mean the old economy or dispensation, to which secular anxieties were more appropriate, and even necessarily incident, than to the new. But it is more natural to understand it of the present life, with its temporary interests and pleasures, as opposed to the future and eternal state. Besides the cares or anxious fears belonging to this mixed and in a certain sense probationary state, and relating chiefly to the means of subsistence, our Lord specifies another danger, *the deceit of wealth*, including both delusive hope and fanciful enjoyment, and applying therefore both to those who make haste to be rich, as being the true source of happiness, and those who reckon themselves actually happy because rich already. To these specifications Mark adds a comprehensive clause including all other worldly distractions, *the desires about* (relating to) *the other* (or remaining things), i. e. whatever else, belonging only to the present life, can be an object of such overweening covetous desire as to interfere with the legitimate effect of the instruction which has been received in reference to higher and more enduring interests. The comprehensive or residuary character of this clause is adverse to the distinction which might otherwise be recognized between the *cares* (or anxious fears) and the *desires* (or carnal hopes) of this life, as *the rest* (or other things) implies diversity of objects rather than of feelings towards them. *Entering in*, i. e. after the reception of the truth, or as intrusive strangers who have no right to admission, but ought to have been shut out. *Choke the word*, as in the parable itself (v. 7) the thorns *choked the seed*, another mixture of the sign and the thing signified, but still less confusing than in vs. 14. 15. 17, because even in the parable *to choke* is a strong figure as applied to plants, requiring little modification to adapt it to spiritual subjects. The same thing substantially is true of the remaining clause, *and it becomes unfruitful*, i. e. the word or truth considered as a seed, because intended to produce beneficial effects upon the life and character of those who hear it, in default of which the same thing may be said of it as was before said of the seed which represents it, that *it yielded not fruit* (see above, on 7.)

20. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive (it), and bring

forth fruit, some thirty fold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

Having thus applied the three ideal cases of unfruitful sowing to three well-known forms of human experience, our Lord concludes his exposition of the parable, by doing the same thing with respect to the one favourable case which it presented, but which really includes a vast variety, at least in the measure or degree of fruitfulness, denoted by the ratio or proportion of the fruit or ripe grain to the seed or sown grain. *These are those sown, &c.,* as in v. 18, i. e. those whose case is represented by the sowing upon good ground. These, like all the others, *hear the word,* receive instruction in the doctrine of the kingdom, and like two of the preceding classes, actively *accept* it, with assent and approbation, but unlike them all, escaping or resisting the occasions of unfruitfulness before described, retain it (Luke 8, 15) and *bear fruit*, not merely for a time, but in continuance, with perseverance and yet with great diversity of actual attainment, corresponding to the different proportions which the crop bears to the literal seed sown, which Luke omits, but Mark and Matthew here repeat, though not in the same order (Matt. 13, 23, *a hundred, sixty, thirty.*) Even the most unreflecting reader cannot need to be reminded that the numbers thus selected are intended to convey the general idea of proportional diversity, and not to limit that diversity to three specific rates. Hence our Lord, in expounding this part of the parable, simply repeats what he had said in the parable itself, without attaching a specific import to the several amounts, a lesson and example to inferior expounders, not only here but in all analogous cases. The same thing may be said in substance of the three cases of unfruitfulness, except that there is reason to believe that they are not given merely as selected samples, but as comprehensive heads to which all particular occasions of unfruitfulness in spiritual husbandry may be reduced. (See above, on v. 16.)

21. And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?

To the exposition of the parable Mark adds a most important and significant appendix, perhaps uttered on the same occasion, although Matthew gives it elsewhere, as a portion of the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 5, 15. 7, 2.) But this is easily explained upon the obvious and probable assumption, that these sentences belonged to those aphoristic formulas which Christ appears to have thrown out on various occasions, and with some diversity of application, by neglecting which interpreters have sometimes thrown the history into confusion. If, as is certainly conceivable, these words were uttered more than once, Matthew having given them in one place, would be likely to omit them in the other, while Mark, who does not give the Sermon on the Mount at all, would be just as likely to insert them here. The charge of incoherence

and irrelevance in this connection rests upon the false assumption that these brief proverbial maxims, forming one of the most characteristic features of our Saviour's (*διδαχὴ*) method of instruction, could be uttered only once or in a single application; whereas their very use and purpose was to be repeatedly thrown out in various connections. Those before us, therefore, are to be explained, not from Matthew's context, but from Mark's, to which they are perfectly appropriate, whether actually uttered at the same time with the parable or not. *He said to them*, might mean upon a different occasion, but according to Mark's usage (see above, on vs. 9, 11, 13), rather on the same. One design is to preclude the notion of an esoteric doctrine, like that of the heathen mysteries and priesthoods, to be shared only by a chosen few. This heathenish idea might have seemed to be countenanced by the distinction which he made between the multitude and his disciples, and the additional instruction given to the latter as a sort of favoured class. In opposition to this natural but dangerous mistake, he tells them here that the ultimate design of all his teachings was the general diffusion of religious knowledge; that whatever exceptions or reserves there might be, they were only temporary interruptions of his customary course, and would eventually answer the same purpose. This important caution is conveyed by the familiar figure of a domestic light, i. e. a candle, lamp, or lantern, which may be momentarily concealed, or its light shaded, but cannot without folly and absurdity be permanently put beneath a vessel or a couch. The proper place for such a light is the candlestick, or lamp-stand, and it cannot be rationally put in any other, except for some transient accidental reason. The form of the question is the same as in 3, 19, presupposing a negative answer (it is not so, . . . . is it?) A light does not come . . . . does it? *Is brought*, literally *comes*, a personification perfectly familiar in the dialect of common life, and in reference to the very same subject. The size or capacity of the Roman modius (about one peck of our measure) is of no more importance to the meaning of the passage than the dimensions of the couch or bed. It is mentioned not as a specific measure, but as a utensil with which they were familiar in their houses. The same idea might be now conveyed by speaking of a box or basket. The verb is to be tacitly repeated in the last clause. Does it not come (is it not brought, for the very purpose) *that it may be put upon the candlestick or lamp-stand?* a derivative form of the word meaning *light*, and to be rendered in accordance with it. The nexus between this verse and the one before it is obscured by the omission of the intervening thought, that a domestic light may now and then be thus concealed, but only for a moment and for some necessary purpose. So, too, the light of his instructions, though occasionally veiled in parable or otherwise obstructed, was intended to diffuse itself, and even when confined for the present to a few, was so confined in order to be more effectually shed abroad.

22. For there is nothing hid, which shall not be mani-

fested ; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.

What he had just expressed by lively figures he now says in literal or plain terms, the connection being indicated by the *for*. As if he had said, these figures drawn from your domestic habits, are appropriate to your spiritual duties and advantage, because, &c. *There is not any thing hid which may not be revealed*, the construction in Greek being highly idiomatic, so that a literal version (*whatsoever may be not revealed*) would be unmeaning or convey a wrong idea. The last clause is not a mere reiteration of the same thought in other words, but adds a strong expression of design or purpose. Not only shall what is now concealed be made known, but it is now concealed in order to be made known. The common word for hidden, secret, is exchanged for a cognate but more emphatic compound, which is itself the source of our word *apocrypha*, as primarily meaning something hid away or brought out from concealment. *Nor has any thing become (or been made) secret, but that it might come into open (view), or be made public.* The very form of this clause shows that neither it nor that before it can be here (whatever it may mean in Matthew) understood as a threatening of detection and exposure to concealed iniquity ; for how can this be said to have become (or been made secret) in order that it might be brought to light, unless we understand the first words as denoting God's permission or endurance of the secrecy, or attenuate the meaning of the particle (*in order that*), both which are gratuitous and violent constructions, not to be assumed without necessity. The obvious reference in this connection, which is thereby cleared of incoherence and abruptness, is to the partial transient obscuration of the light of Christ's own teachings, by the use of parables or otherwise, not as preventive but eventually promotive of its full diffusion.

### 23. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

If these words had been given only here by Mark, as they are given earlier by Matthew (13, 9), it might be made a question which evangelist has put them into their exact place. But as Mark records them twice, and the words themselves belong to that class of our Lord's expressions which were most apt to be repeated often (see above, on v. 9), there can be no doubt that they were so repeated upon this occasion, though the fact has been preserved by Mark alone. Such repetition is the less improbable because the solemn admonition which precedes was very liable to misconstruction, as appears from the incongruous sense often put upon it still, and then made a pretext for accusing the historian of incoherence. To put the disciples on their guard against such misconception, was a purpose which might well excuse a still more irksome repetition of our Lord's proverbial warning, that whoever had the faculty of hearing ought to use it now if ever, as a safeguard against error in relation to a most important privilege and duty.

24. And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear. With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you, and unto you that hear, shall more be given.

*And he said to them*, perhaps upon a different occasion, and recorded just here only to complete Mark's statement of the Saviour's teachings upon this important subject. Here again, however, as in v. 21, it is more probable that it was uttered at the same time with the language which precedes it in the context. Nevertheless, let it be observed that this assumption is by no means requisite to vindicate the writer, who makes no assertion either way, and whose purpose in recording these words is as perfectly accomplished on the one hypothesis as on the other. The only difference is that between the phrase, 'he then went on to say,' and the phrase, 'at another time he said,' &c. *Take heed*, literally, *see*, i. e. see to it, look out, be circumspect or cautious (see above, on 2, 44, where a different but synonymous verb is used.) *What ye hear*, i. e. from me, on this and other like occasions, which implies or necessarily suggests the caution, *how ye hear* (Luke 8, 18), as their manner of receiving his instructions must depend upon their views as to what those instructions were. Then follows another of the Saviour's gnomes or maxims, which, though always meaning the same thing essentially, were adapted and intended to be variously applied. The specific application here must be determined, not by the connection of the same words in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 7, 2. Luke 6, 37), where they have reference to censorious judgments, but by their connection here, where they can only be referred to the same subject with the words preceding. i. e. Christ's peculiar method of instruction and the way to profit by it. The essential meaning of the maxim in both cases is, that giving and receiving are reciprocal, like action and reaction as a law of physics. The specific application here is, that he who would receive instruction must give something in return, to wit, intelligent attention, a desire to be instructed, and a proper use of what he knows already. In this sense, as in many others, might our Lord, without a change in the essential meaning of his language, say to them, *in what measure ye measure shall be measured to you*, i. e. I will treat you as learners just as you treat me as your instructor, this specific application being not only suggested by the context, but distinctly intimated in the next clause, *unto you that hear shall more be given*, a correct paraphrase, but not a literal translation, which is, *there shall be added* (or addition shall be made) *to you hearing* (or to you that hear.) This last word shows that the law of reciprocity is here applied, not to the act of judging, but to that of hearing, i. e. hearing Christ's instructions.

25. For he that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

The idea suggested in v. 24 is here expressed in still another form,

which Matthew introduces earlier in this discourse (13, 12), but Luke (8, 18) agrees with Mark in placing at the close of this important admonition. The question of arrangement is of less importance, as our Lord appears to have pursued the subject both before and after he explained the parable of the sower, and the only difference is in this relative position of the sentence. We may either suppose therefore (as in v. 23) that he uttered the words twice, or regard it as a matter of indifference whether they preceded or followed his infallible interpretation of the Sower. Applying the same rule of exposition as before, to wit, that the specific application of such maxims is to be determined by the context in every given case of their occurrence, we shall find that the one here uttered has respect not to grace or spiritual influence in general, but to illuminating grace or spiritual knowledge in particular. Our Lord exhorts them to attend to what he says, and lays it down as the foundation of ulterior attainments; for in this sense too it may be said, *Whoever has, to him shall be given*, i. e. whoever takes, keeps, and uses, what I tell him now, shall know still more hereafter. And the converse is of course true, *he who has not* (in possession and in use what I have previously taught him), *even what he has* (of previous knowledge and attainment, or even of this, as a mere speculative intellectual possession) *shall be taken from him*. This involves a threatening of divine retribution, but is strictly and directly the announcement of a general law, both intellectual and moral, namely, that the only choice is between loss and gain, advancement and recession; that there can be no stagnation or repose; that the only method of securing what we have is by improving it, the failure to do which is tantamount to losing it or throwing it away. It is only another aspect of the same important lesson, no doubt uttered by our Lord in some discourse upon this subject, and most probably in that before us, that we find in Luke's report of it (8, 18), namely, that the value of previous attainments in religious knowledge, unless thus improved and advanced upon, is only specious and apparent, and that even this, in case of failure to increase and grow, will be withdrawn, or seen in its true colours, for *whoever has not* (in possession and in use what I have taught him, but imagines that he can retain it as it is without its growing either more or less), *even what he (thus) seems to have* (or thinks he has, of spiritual knowledge) *shall be taken from him*, not as an arbitrary punishment inflicted by authority, but as the necessary intellectual and moral product of his own neglect.

26. And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;

27. And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

Passing over the parable of the Tares, which Matthew here gives (13, 24-30) with our Lord's interpretation of it (36-50), an omission not easily explained on the hypothesis of mere compilation or abridg.

ment, Mark records a parable not given by the others, although uttered at the same time with the Sower, or at least intended to illustrate the same subject, by analogies derived from the same source, to wit, the processes of husbandry. Having shown the different reception of the word by different classes, exploded the idea of all mystery or esoteric doctrine, and exhorted them to caution as to what and how they heard, he now proceeds to teach them in the same way, that the ultimate effect is wholly independent of man's industry and care, however necessary these may be. The idea is essentially the same with that expressed by Paul in 1 Cor. 3, 6. 7. Here as there, too, the external form is that of a parable, not a narrative indeed (see above, on v. 2), but still an illustration drawn from the analogy of human experience and the usages of common life. The main fact thus alleged is that although man must sow and reap, all that lies between these two extremes is not only independent of his power but beyond his observation. *And he said*, in pursuance of the same design, and probably, but not necessarily, upon the same occasion (see above, on vs. 9. 13. 21. 24.) *So is the kingdom of God*, i. e. such is its growth and progress in the world and in the hearts of men. *As if a man* (not the specific term opposed to *woman*, but the generic term, equivalent to human being, person, and here meaning *any one*) *cast seed* (hypothetically stated although one of the most common facts of every-day experience) *upon the earth* (as if to indicate a careless superficial sowing as the whole that man can do until the harvest) *and* (then) *sleep and wake* (as usual) *night and day* (according to his ordinary habit) without using any other means to make it germinate, or even thinking of it, till the time of its maturity approaches. But notwithstanding his neglect or inability to aid its germination, it does *germinate and grow* (literally *lengthen* or prolong itself) *how, knows not he*, the pronoun being placed emphatically at the end, as much as to say, whoever else may know it, it is all unknown to him, by whom, and for whose benefit, the seed was sown. The form of the verbs *sprout and grow* is still subjunctive or expressive of contingency, because although such cases are of every-day occurrence, the particular one mentioned is ideal or imaginary (see above, on v. 3.)

28. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

*Of herself*, in Greek an adjective which means spontaneous or self-moving, and the neuter form of which (*automaton*) is used in English to denote a self-moving machine, particularly one which imitates the actions of the human body. It is here to be relatively understood with reference to man and his exertions. So far as these are concerned, the earth is independent and self-acting, in the growth of plants, but not as respects God, whose agency, so far from being here excluded, is impliedly opposed to that of man. What is here affirmed is true not only of the first germination, but of all the later stages and developments. *First the blade*, literally, *grass*, or that period of growth in which

grains and grasses are alike. *Then the ear*, the same word that occurs above in v. 23. *Then the full* (or full-grown, ripe, mature) *corn* (i. e. grain, as in the passage first referred to.)

29. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

*Is brought forth*, literally, *gives up, yields* (i. e. itself) to him who sowed it and is to enjoy it. *Immediately*, as soon as it is ready for his use, *he putteth in* (literally, *sendeth out*) the sickle, i. e. reaps or causes to be reaped by others, *because the harvest stands near* (is at hand), and it is therefore time again for man to work. The main point here is not the act of reaping but the agent, or the fact that now man's agency begins again, after having been suspended since the sowing. In other words, man sows and reaps, but cannot make the seed grow or the harvest ripen. So the word or truth of God must be diffused by human agency, and acts on human interests for good or evil; but its whole efficiency is in itself, i. e. in God who gave it and who renders it effectual to men's salvation.

30. And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

31. (It is) like a grain of mustard-seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth.

32. But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

*And he said*, as in v. 26, in pursuance of the same subject, and most probably in direct continuation of the same discourse. This formula here introduces a third parable or illustration, drawn from the analogies of husbandry, and recorded also by Matthew (13, 31, 32) immediately after that of the Sower. The truth taught is the expansive and diffusive nature of the true religion and the necessary growth of the Messiah's kingdom, both in society at large and in the hearts of individuals, from the most infinitesimal beginnings to the most immense results. This idea is expressed, in a parabolic or proverbial manner, by the growth of the *sinapi* or oriental mustard, from a seed unusually small, not merely to a bush or shrub, but to a tree with spreading boughs, affording shade and shelter to the birds of heaven (or the air, see above, on v. 4.) *Less, or lesser*, an English form which, although different in origin, may serve to represent the double comparative in Greek. *Less than all seeds*, in proportion to the size which it attains at its maturity. *Herbs*, i. e. garden plants or vegetables. *May, or more exactly, can*, are able. *Lodge*, literally, camp or pitch

tent, tabernacle ; then more generally, find shelter, and still more so, dwell or sojourn. This last clause is added to show that the boughs or branches previously mentioned are not merely apparent but substantial and like those of trees, sufficient to sustain the weight of birds alighting and remaining on them.

33. And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear (it.)

These are mere samples of the parables by which our Lord elucidated or disguised the doctrine of his kingdom to the different classes of his hearers in proportion to their previous knowledge and their present receptivity of such instruction (see above, on vs. 24. 25.) *As they were able to hear*, i. e. as some understand it, to hear intelligently or with patience. It may however have the stricter and more simple sense, as they had opportunity and leisure to attend on his instructions.

34. But without a parable spake he not unto them ; and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

This cannot mean that he never taught them in any other form, which would be contradicted by the whole course of the history, but only that whatever he did teach in parables he did not also teach in other forms, but, as the last clause more explicitly asserts, reserved the explanation for a private interview with his disciples. This closes Mark's account of our Lord's parables, including, as we have now seen, a full report of one with its author's own interpretation (vs. 1-20), an explanation of his purpose in employing this mode of instruction and direction to his followers how to profit by it (21-25); two additional parables, without a formal explanation (26-32); and a general statement of his practice in relation to this matter (33-34.)

35. And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.

Having finished his account of our Lord's parables, Mark now resumes that of his miracles, selecting one wholly different from any previously recorded, and evincing the same power over the elements which he had already proved himself to possess over evil spirits and diseases. *The same day*, literally, *that day*, which might possibly refer to some day previously spoken of but not in the immediate context. But the only natural construction is the strict one, which makes *that day* mean the day on which the previous discourse was uttered. The supposed inconsistency with Matthew (13, 18) who connects this incident with the healing of Peter's wife's mother at Capernaum, proceeds upon the false assumption that the connection in both gospels is a strictly chronological one. But Matthew's text gives no such intimation, and his

words may just as well mean, *seeing* (on another occasion) *many crowds about him*. Mark alone specifies the time, nor is there any ground for questioning the truth of this specification. *He says to them*, his personal adherents and attendants, *let us go through* (across the lake) *to the other side*, or *to the (part) beyond*, the last Greek word being that from which the province east of Jordan took its Greek name of Perea (see above, on 3, 6.) Not only the day but the exact time of day is given, *when the even was come*, literally, *evening coming* (or *being come*.)

36. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.

And they (the disciples) having sent away, dismissed, let go, *the crowd, take him (to themselves), as he was* (already in the boat, or in the boat as he was), i. e. without allowing time for preparation, an expression indicating prompt obedience. Mark alone records the circumstance that other boats were with them, i. e. when they started.

37. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

*Arose*, literally, *is*, begins to be, or happens. *Beat*, literally, *threw* (i. e. itself) *upon*, assailed, or made an attack. *Into* denotes something more, namely, actual entrance or invasion, the effect of which is then described in the remaining words. *Now full*, literally, *already filled*, and covered with the waves (Matt. 8, 24), and therefore in great danger (Luke 8, 23.)

38. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish ?

While his followers were otherwise and elsewhere busied, *he himself was at the stern*, or back part of the vessel, (lying) *on*, or (leaning) *against the cushion*, such as were probably provided in such vessels for the use of passengers. *Sleeping*, not merely in appearance but reality. His human nature was refreshed by sleep like that of other men, while his divinity (as Calvin says) was watching. *Awake him* is in Greek a stronger term, being an emphatic compound, meaning to arouse or rouse up. *Master*, in its old sense of teacher (*magister*), corresponding to *disciple*, and in the parallel accounts to *Lord* (Matt. 8, 25) and *overseer* or *prefect* (Luke 8, 24.) This appeal to him as a religious teacher gives peculiar force to the ensuing miracle as a convincing attestation of his doctrine and divine legation. *Carest thou not* is in Greek an impersonal construction, *is it not a care to thee*, is it a matter which concerns thee not? *That we perish*, not in general, at some time, but *are perishing*, at this time, even while we speak. This word is common to all three

accounts, while those accompanying it vary, but without effect on the essential meaning. The question implies not only fear but indignation or complaint that he should sleep while they were going to destruction.

39. And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

*And being roused* (or thoroughly awakened), the passive participle of the verb in the preceding verse. *Rebuked*, in words, as if it were a rational agent, which some consider as implying that the storm was raised by Satan or his demons, who were then the real objects of the following reproof and order. This may seem to be countenanced, and was perhaps suggested, by the sameness of this order and the one addressed to the demoniac in 1, 25. *Peace* is in Greek an active verb, *be silent*, hold thy peace, be still, which last phrase is employed in our version to translate the stronger word that follows, though it is another passive form of the verb used in 1, 25, and meaning strictly, *be muzzled*. The peculiar force of the perfect imperative passive, as if commanding what was past already, cannot be perfectly expressed in English. *Ceased*, another most expressive word in Greek, denoting weariness or rest from labour. *There was*, began to be, became, or came to pass, *a great calm*, i. e. perfect stillness of the sea so lately agitated by the wind.

40. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful ? how is it that ye have no faith ?

*So fearful* may either mean afraid in so unreasonable a degree, or with a kind of fear so inconsistent with your faith in me ? In either case the question implies censure and disapprobation, not because there was no danger, or because they had no right to be alarmed, but because their danger although real, and alarm though natural and not irrational, ought to have been neutralized and nullified by his presence and by unshaken confidence in his ability and willingness to save them. This trust they may have been prevented from reposing in him by the fact that he was then asleep ; but this could only prove the weakness of their faith in limiting his power to a wakeful state. By being *thus fearful*, i. e. afraid that they would sink before they could arouse him, they provoked and justified the searching question, *how have ye not faith* ? i. e. such faith as ye ought to have, and such as would have saved you from this unbelieving terror. *How is it that ye have no faith* is too strong, and implies that they were absolutely unbelievers.

41. And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him ?

*They feared a great fear*, a familiar Hebrew idiom, also known in

other languages, and were gratuitously weakened by translating it *exceedingly*. Another needless variation from the form of the original is *what manner of man* instead of *who then* (or *therefore*), a logical formula, introducing a conclusion or deduction from the facts already stated. Some understand this as the language of the crew or boatmen, and not of the disciples, who could scarcely have inquired, after all that they had witnessed, who or what he was. But although such an expression on the part of others seems to be preserved by Matthew (8, 27), the words in Mark are naturally those of the disciples, and can easily be explained, not as expressing any ignorance or doubt as to the person of their master, but unfeigned astonishment at this new proof of his control, not only over demons and diseases, but also over winds and waves, which they had seen, like human slaves, obey him at a word. Thus understood, the last of this verse suggests the reason of Mark's adding this particular miraculous performance, namely, that he might complete his series of examples, not promiscuously taken but selected out of many, for the purpose of presenting in a new light Christ's dominion over every form of evil, as well natural as moral.

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## CHAPTER V.

CONTINUING the narrative of the Saviour's miracles, resumed near the close of the preceding chapter, Mark records three more, not promiscuously taken from the mass or accidentally remembered, but deliberately chosen, as intrinsically wonderful, and also on account of their dissimilarity to one another and to any that had gone before; thus showing a definite intention in the writer to illustrate his great subject, the prophetic ministry of Christ, not by an indiscriminate array of facts, however striking in themselves, but by distinct examples of the various powers which he claimed and exercised. The first of the miracles here given belongs to the class of demoniacal possessions, but presents a case not only of peculiar aggravation but of great importance in its bearing on the evidence of Christ's Messiahship (1-21.) The other two are complicated together, not through any fault of the historians, but from their fidelity in reproducing what occurred precisely as it did occur, one miracle having been performed while Christ was on his way to work another. The former was the healing of the woman with the issue of blood, affording a clear proof of Christ's omniscience and compassion, and a striking illustration of the various modes in which his cures were wrought. For while in this case the disease was checked by contact with his garment, in the one that follows, he had gone to a considerable distance for the purpose, and performed the miracle with more than usual formality. This was a

miracle of resuscitation, the first of that class upon record, and therefore carrying vastly further than before the demonstration of our Lord's divine legation and extraordinary powers (21-43.) The obvious indications of selection and design in these three narratives not only binds them to each other in one context, but confirms our previous conclusions with respect to the unity and plan of the whole history.

1. And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

The next miracle, recorded by the three evangelists, and represented by them all as immediately subsequent to the stilling of the storm upon the sea of Galilee, is the dispossession of a multitude of demons and their entrance into lower animals, with Christ's permission or at his command. The scene of this transaction was on the east side of the lake, called by Mark and Luke (8, 26) the land or district of the *Gadarenes*, so named from *Gadara*, a strong and wealthy city of Perea, not named in Scripture but described by Josephus as a Greek town, i. e. probably inhabited by Gentiles. It was attached to Herod's jurisdiction by Augustus, but annexed to Syria both before and afterwards. The highest modern geographical authorities identify it with extensive ruins at a place called Umkeis, on a mountainous range east of Jordan, near the southern end of the lake and overlooking it. The district appears to have had other names, derived from towns or tribes, one of which has been preserved by Matthew (8, 28), though the reading there is doubtful. There is no doubt as to the essential fact that what is here recorded took place on the east side of the lake and opposite to Galilee (Luke 8, 26.) Beyond this the details of the topography are unimportant.

2. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

*To him coming out*, i. e. as he landed (Luke 8, 27), not merely after he had done so, which would admit of an indefinite interval, whereas the landing and the meeting were simultaneous or immediately successive. *Met him*, or came to meet him, possibly with some unfriendly purpose. *Out of the tombs*, a Greek word originally meaning memorials, then monuments, then tombs or sepulchres. As these were usually in the shape of houses, or of chambers hewn in the rock (see below, on 15, 46), they would easily afford a haunt and refuge in such cases as the one here mentioned. *A man*, originally from the city (Luke 8, 27), probably of *Gadara*, but now driven from his home by an aggravated demoniacal possession. There were really two men who now appeared in this condition (Matt. 8, 28); but Mark mentions only one, perhaps the more alarming and distressing case, as sufficient for his purpose (compare Luke 8, 27.) *In an unclean spirit*, not merely in company, but in intimate and mysterious union, with a demon (see

above, on 1, 23. 32. 3, 22.) Thus far the case resembled multitudes of others which our Lord had previously dealt with, excepting in the circumstance suggested by the words, *out of the tombs*, and more distinctly stated in the next verse.

3. Who had (his) dwelling among the tombs ; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains :

Here we begin to see a fearful singularity in this case, as compared with all the other demoniacal possessions previously mentioned, and accounting in some measure for its being singled out and separately stated. Hitherto such cases have been spoken of as aggravated forms of disease, preternaturally caused but under the control and cure of others. (See above, on 1, 23. 32. 34, and compare Matt. 12, 22.) Here, on the contrary, the sufferer is a voluntary outcast from society, who *had the residence (or dwelling) in* (not merely *among*) *the tombs*, a kindred and synonymous expression with the one employed in v. 2. *Could bind*, literally, *could not bind*, a double negative in Greek enforcing the negation. (See above, on 2, 44.) *With bonds*, whether chains or cords, the original expression, according to its usual derivation, only signifying strength and close confinement. It appears to be implied that such coercion was the ordinary practice, which indeed had been tried in this case at an earlier stage, as stated in the next verse.

4. Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces : neither could any (man) tame him.

It was not a mere conjecture or gratuitous assumption, that the usual coercive measures were impossible in this case, but a matter of experience. It was so regarded *for* (or on account of) *his having been often bound with fetters*, a word derived from *feet* both in Greek and English, and denoting any thing by which the feet are fastened, whether chain or cord. It is implied in this account and expressed in Luke's (8, 27), that the case was one of ancient standing, and had been growing worse, as the confinement which had once been practised was no longer possible ; unless we understand the negative expression in v. 3 to mean that he could not be confined for any length of time, but always sooner or later broke his bonds. *Plucked asunder*, torn apart, or pulled in different directions, with the preternatural strength sometimes caused by ordinary madness, but in this case obviously owing to the presence of the demon, who was suffered to influence both mind and body but with absolute dominion over neither. (See above, on 1, 23-32). The other passive verb here used is properly the opposite or converse of the first, meaning *rubbed together*, i. e. with great violence and thereby crushed or broken. This does not necessarily imply a difference in the structure or material of the *chains* and *fetters*, both verbs by a common Hebrew idiom, not unknown in other languages,

referring to both nouns, as if it had been said that the chains and fetters were either torn apart or crushed together by the frantic violence and strength of the demoniac. It is only a more general expression of the same fact, that *no one* (*man* is supplied by the translators, see above, on 2, 21,) *could tame him*. *Could* is neither an auxiliary nor the verb used in the last clause of v. 3, but another still more clearly significant of strength or power; *no one was strong* (enough) *to tame him*. This last verb properly denotes the subjugation of the lower animals by man, but is also applied to moral influence on human subjects. (For examples of both senses, compare James 3, 7. 8.) It may here express a complex notion, comprehending moral suasion and physical coercion; but the latter having been already mentioned, the former is probably the main idea. As no one could confine his limbs, so no one could subdue his will; it was equally impossible to bind and tame him.

5. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

Having stated negatively his indomitable fierceness, Mark completes the melancholy picture by describing positively how he spent his time. *Always*, literally, *through all* (time), i. e. continually, which is thus expressed in more specific terms. *Night and day*, suggesting the idea of insomnia, or sleeplessness, one of the most distressing incidents and symptoms of insanity in some of its familiar forms, but in this case no doubt aggravated by the ceaseless stimulation of the evil spirits. *In the hills* (or *mountains*), agrees well with the localities of this transaction, as the district south-east of the lake is hilly, and the ancient Gadara appears to have been situated near the summit of the range of highlands upon that side of the Jordan. *Crying*, either with pain or from unnatural excitement, an effect which seems to have been common in the case of demoniacal possessions (see above, on 1, 26. 3, 11, and below, on v. 7.) *Cutting* is in Greek an intensive compound corresponding to *cut down*, *cut up*, in English, and denoting here not mere occasional incisions but a general laceration of the body in the wretched sufferer's frantic war upon himself, or with the demon who possessed him. *With stones*, the sharp flints scattered on the surface of desert tracts in Palestine, and several times mentioned elsewhere. (See Matt. 3, 9. 4, 3.) To this fearful picture nothing can be added but the circumstances mentioned in the parallel accounts, that he would wear no clothes (Luke, 8, 27), and that he (with his companion) was the terror of the country, so that no one dared to pass that way (Matt. 8, 28.)

6. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him.

Thus far the evangelist has been describing the habitual condition of this terrible demoniac; now he describes his conduct upon this occasion. *Seeing Jesus from afar he ran*, the local adverb qualifying

either verb or both, and not the first exclusively, as in the version. This act of running from a distance may have looked to the spectators like a violent attack, and may at first have been so intended, which would make the change more striking when, instead of flying at the stranger, as he had been wont to do as long as any came that way, he suddenly fell down to him (Luke 8, 28), i. e. before him, *and worshipped*, i. e. did him reverence or homage, in the customary oriental method by prostration, or by kissing his feet, or the ground beneath them, or his own hand, the primary meaning of the Greek verb being that of *kissing*, or in the compound form here used, *kissing* (the hand) *to* (or *at*) one, in the way of reverential salutation. The English verb (*to worship*) also has a wider meaning in the older writers than the one to which it is confined by later usage, that of adoring, reverencing as a divine being. It is not impossible, however, that this stronger sense is here intended, since the demons recognized our Lord, not merely as the *Son of man*, or the Messiah (see above, on 2, 10), but as the *Son of God*. (See below, upon the next verse.)

7. And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, (thou) Son of the Most High God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

The description of his acts is followed by a record of his words. *And crying with a great voice*, seems to mean not merely that he spoke loud, or even that his voice was prematurely strong, but also that before he uttered the words here recorded, he gave vent to one of those unearthly shrieks, which have been already mentioned (on v. 5), as symptomatic of possession, a distinction rendered still more clear in Luke (8, 28), by the arrangement of the sentence. The words themselves seem to have been a sort of formula adopted by the demons or demoniacs, when brought into contact with the great exorcist. This is at least the case with the preliminary question, which is identical with that recorded in 1, 24, and there explained, except that the contemptuous name (*Nazarene*) is here exchanged for the divine one (*Son of God*). It is true that even then the evil spirits formally owned him as the *Holy One of God*; but this, as there explained (on 1, 24), relates not so much to his essential nature as to his mediatorial work and office; whereas *Son of God* denotes community of nature or identity of essence with the Father, from whom he derives the title. (See above, on 1, 1, 3, 11.) But although this is the meaning of the title in its highest application, it admits of others (as in Matt. 5, 9-45), and perhaps in Mark 15, 39. Luke 3, 38), and therefore cannot of itself prove that the demons knew our Lord to be a divine person, although this is certainly the obvious and natural presumption from the usage of the words, confirmed by the additional epithet *Most High* (or *Highest*), which distinguishes the true God from all false gods, and would seem to be employed here for the purpose of determining the nature of the Son by indicating that of the Father. The recognition and expostulation are succeeded by an earnest and importunate petition. *I adjure*

*thee by God*, a much stronger expression than those used by Luke (8 28) and Matthew (8, 29.) *To adjure* is properly to *make swear* or administer an oath, i. e. to exhort one in the name of God to tell the truth, in which sense a compounded form of the same Greek verb is employed in Matt. 26, 63; and by a wider application the uncompounded verb itself denotes any solemn charge or exhortation in the name of God (as in 1 Thess. 5, 27), particularly such a call addressed to evil spirits, and requiring them to leave their victim (as in Acts 19, 13), whence the verb *exorcise* and its cognate terms (*exorcism* and *exorcist*), found their way through the later ecclesiastical Greek and Latin into our own and other modern languages. The simple verb, as here used, denotes urgent entreaty in the name of God, or with express appeal to his authority as sanctioning the prayer. It is equivalent to saying, ‘I implore thee to do that which God himself approves or would approve in this case.’ This appeal to God was not a mere audacious blasphemy, but a plausible deduction from his having really deferred the full infliction of their sentence, so that Christ’s interference with them might be speciously described as an anticipation of their final doom, or tormenting them before the time. (Matt. 8, 29.) From the Greek word (*βαράνος*) for a *touchstone* (called in Latin *lapis lydius*) upon which the ancients rubbed the precious metals as a test of purity and genuineness, comes a verb (*βαρανζω*) expressive of that operation; then of any *proof* or trial; then of torture as a test of truth and falsehood, or a means of discovering the former; then of torture or torment, as the severest form of punishment, in which sense it is used here. ‘We implore thee to deal with us as God himself does, that is, not to precipitate our final doom, but to prolong the respite which we now enjoy.’ This petition, and the reason indirectly used for it, corroborates the previous presumption, though it falls short of a perfect demonstration that the demons recognized our Lord as being, in the strict and highest sense, the Son of God.

### 8. (For he said unto him, Come out of the man, (thou) unclean spirit.)

As this adjuration, or importunate petition, might have seemed to be entirely without pretext or occasion, and therefore historically doubtful or improbable, Mark here goes back a single step to introduce a circumstance before omitted, and supplying the required link of connection. It was not without cause that he thus adjured him, *for he* (Jesus) *said to him* (the demon), i. e. said to him before the adjuration just recorded, which is equivalent in fact, though not in form, to the pluperfect (*he had said*), which we should naturally use in English. What he had said is then distinctly stated. The leading or essential word is, *Come out!* The remaining words are a description of the person thus addressed, the first generically, as *the spirit*, i. e. the one in possession, then specifically, as *the unclean* (or impure one), an emphatic collocation, only partially imitated in the English version, *unclean spirit*.

9. And he asked him, What (is) thy name? And he answered, saying, My name (is) Legion: for we are many.

The connection here is a little doubtful, though the sense is plain. These words may either be included in the supplementary and parenthetical statement of what Christ had said before the adjuration in v. 7 (*for he said, . . . and asked him*), or may be the resumption of the main narrative thus momentarily interrupted (for before they thus adjured him he had said, . . . and after they adjured him, he inquired), which last, on the whole, appears to be the natural construction. *Asked* is not the simple verb so rendered in 4, 10, but a compound form corresponding rather to our *questioned* or *examined*, perhaps implying a judicial rather than a curious or indifferent interrogation. *What is thy name?* literally, *what name to thee (belongs)?* So too in the answer, *Legion (is) a name to me*, i. e. *My name is Legion*. The meaning of this answer is immediately explained by him who gave it. (I call myself so) because many are we. The name itself, borrowed from the organization of the Roman army, was no doubt proverbial wherever the Roman arms prevailed. The precise number of a legion (varying in different times and circumstances from three to above six thousand) is of no more importance to the meaning here than that of the modius or Roman bushel in 4, 21. The idea meant to be conveyed is not that of a definite number, but the complex one of multitude and military organization, just as *troop*, *regiment*, and *host* are used in English, even when there is no reference to an army proper, but to something more organic, although not necessarily more numerous, than would be expressed by *mob* and *rabble*, or even by *multitude* and *crowd*. *My name is Legion* is equivalent to saying, in more modern phrase, I am myself (or in myself) a host, not however as a metaphor for strength, but as denoting literal plurality of persons. It may be more fully paraphrased as follows: 'I am one, yet more than one, nay many, an embattled host, a legion, sworn to the same cause and serving under one commander.' But besides this explanation of the name, afforded by contemporary usage and association, there are still two questions to be answered in elucidation of the verse before us. The first is, to whom did our Lord address his question, and by whom was it responded to? This point is of less real than apparent moment, as it relates to something quite beyond the reach of human scrutiny, and all that was perceptible would be the same on any supposition, i. e. whether we suppose that the inquiry was propounded to the man in reference to his real name, but answered madly under the direction of the demons as relating to themselves; or whether we explain it as addressed directly to the latter, and intended to call forth the answer which was actually given. The only remaining supposition, that our Lord desired to know the individual or personal designation of the demon as such, is exceedingly improbable, partly because he did not need the information for himself, and it could not be of any use to others; partly because the question would then presuppose a single spirit, when the answer and the subsequent narrative show that there

were many. This leads to the other doubtful point, to wit, in what sense the possessors of this man are represented both as one and many. The difficulty is not in relation to the actions of the man possessed, whose individuality was not destroyed by this intrusive occupation of his person, but to the express distinction made between him and *an unclean spirit* (v. 2), *the unclean spirit* (v. 8), who possessed him, but who afterwards describes himself as being *many* (v. 9), and is always mentioned subsequently in the plural or collective form (vs. 10. 12. 13. 15.) There are three ways of explaining this apparent inconsistency, either of which is far more rational and easy than the hypothesis of real contradiction, which could hardly have escaped the evangelists themselves and their original or ancient readers, some of whom were on the watch for every symptom of bad faith or error. The first solution is by taking *unclean spirit* (vs. 1. 8) as a collective signifying personal but not individual agency, it being the established form of speech to call the unseen power by which the demoniac was possessed an evil spirit, whether it were one or many. This is not forbidden by the general laws or usages of language, in which nothing is more common than the use of such collectives; but it is without positive example or analogy in the New Testament itself. A second method of solution is to understand the singular term (*spirit*) of the fiend in actual possession, but the plural and collective of his comrades and allies, whom he summons, as it were, to his assistance, and who with him take possession of the swine. But this, if not forbidden absolutely, is at least disconcerted and made to seem less natural, by the express statement, found in all three gospels, that the unclean spirits, which *went into* the swine, *went out* of the demoniac, and Luke says expressly (8, 30), *many demons had gone into him*. Free from all these objections, and positively recommended by its agreement with the military figure of a legion, is a third solution, which supposes a plurality of fiends in actual possession, but with one superior to the rest, as the commander of the legion, and therefore called, by way of eminence, *the unclean spirit*, just as Satan or Beelzebub is elsewhere called *the archon of the demons* (see above, on 3, 22.) Whether Satan is himself *the evil spirit* of this passage, or some intermediate "spiritual wickedness" (Eph. 6, 12) belonging to the hierarchy of hell, is a question of no moment to the exposition. While the first hypothesis is simpler and requires least to be assumed without express authority, the last is recommended by the fact that Satan is not named, even in answer to our Lord's direct interrogation.

10. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

Finding their first expostulation against any interference with them fruitless (see above, on v. 7), they now prefer a less extravagant petition, that if driven from their present stronghold in the bodies of demoniacs, they might at least continue in the country where they had been long perhaps allowed to exercise their baleful power. *He*

*besought him* might be also rendered *they besought him*, as the Greek verb, although singular in form, may have a plural subject of the neuter gender. But as this construction is not common where the neuters denote personal agents, the common version is approved by the highest philological authorities. The subject may be either *the unclean spirit* of vs. 2. 8, or the demoniac possessed by it and not yet free from its obtrusive presence. *Much*, literally *many (things)*, the version *many (spirits)*, or *many (of them)*, being forbidden by the usage just explained. *Besought*, not so strong a word as that in v. 7, but one originally meaning to *call to* (or *for*) one, whether in the sense of invitation (as in Acts 28, 20), or of exhortation (as in Acts 15, 32), or of invocation and entreaty (as in 1, 40 above, and in v. 17 below.) The additional sense of consolation, although common in the Greek of the New Testament (e. g. Matt. 2, 18. 5, 4), is altogether secondary, and would here be wholly inappropriate. *Away out* is a correct translation of the double preposition, prefixed both to the verb and to the noun. The verb is the same that is applied above (in 3, 14) to the sending forth of the apostles, and from which the word *apostle* is itself derived. (For other applications of it, literal and figurative, see above, on 1, 2. 3, 31. 4, 29.) *The country*, not the Holy Land or Palestine, but that division of it where they now were, and to which the Greek word is applied above in v. 1, as it is in 1, 5 to the province of Judea, but never to the whole land of Israel as such, not even in Acts 8, 1. 10, 39. 26, 20, where it still has a provincial meaning. The district here meant is no doubt that of the Gadarenes, where these events took place (see above, on v. 1.) The request itself is not to be explained by any Jewish superstition as to the residence of fiends in deserts, supposed by some to be referred to elsewhere (Matt. 12, 43. Luke 11, 24), but either as a simple wish to continue undisturbed and where they were, or as a cunning pretext for the seizure and destruction of the swine.

11. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.

To the plural (*mountains*) the critics now prefer the singular form (*mountain*), meaning however (as in 3, 13), not a detached peak or eminence, but the whole range of highlands east of Jordan. *Nigh unto*, or more exactly, *at*, next, adjoining (as in 1, 33. 2, 2. 4, 11), i. e. feeding on the slopes or at the foot of the mountains. But even if the sense of *nigh* (or *near*) be preferred there is no contradiction between this account and Matthew's (8, 30), because *far* and *near* are relative expressions, and the same distance which is called *far* in a room would be considered nothing in a landscape or a journey. If the herd was beyond reach, it was far off; if in sight, it was near; and both expressions might be naturally used by the same witness in succession, much more by two independent witnesses. Nor would such a variation, when susceptible of such an explanation, be considered contradictory in any Anglo-Saxon court of justice, although so esteemed in

many a German lecture-room and study. According to our rules of evidence, it might even serve to strengthen both accounts as really though not ostensibly harmonious. *Feeding*, or *being fed*, as the form may be either middle or passive, and we know from v. 14 that there were persons tending them. As swine's flesh was forbidden and the swine an unclean beast according to the law of Moses (Lev. 11, 7. 8. Deut. 14, 8); as the law in general, and especially its ceremonial distinctions, were punctually observed at this time; as the use of swine's flesh is eschewed by all Jews at the present day, and there is no trace of any other practice in the interval: it is highly improbable that these swine were the property of Jews, unless their consciences allowed them to provide forbidden food for Gentiles, and it is simpler to assume that the Gentiles provided it for themselves, which agrees well with the statement of Josephus that Gadara, the chief town of this district, was a Greek city (see above, on v. 1.) The question would be one of little moment if it had not been connected by some writers with their vindication of our Saviour's conduct upon this occasion (see below, on v. 20.)

12. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

It is remarkable that till we reach the tenth verse, the demon, or unclean spirit, is not only spoken of, but speaks as a single individual (*what have I to do with thee? . . . . I adjure thee . . . . that thou torment me not. . . . . My name is legion.*) In the tenth verse there is a transition from the one form to the other, both of which occur there (*he besought him not to send them.*) After the tenth verse, the singular is wholly superseded by the plural, and the remaining words and acts are all ascribed to a plurality of agents. This might seem to be because the spirits, being now expelled from the demoniac, no longer derived even an apparent unity from their alliance with his personality, but spoke and acted for themselves; but they were not yet driven out, as appears from v. 13 (compare Matt. 8, 31.) Some of the critics omit *all* in this verse, others *all the demons*, leaving only the verb, *they besought him*, which is found in all the copies. The verb is the same with that in v. 10, but has here the plural form, so that no such ambiguity exists as in that case. *Devils*, i. e. *demons*, as explained above (on 3, 22.) How they communicated with our Lord is not revealed, but can create no more difficulty than the similar communication between him and Satan as the tempter (see above, on 1, 13.) As they were not yet driven out when this request was made, they may still have made use of the man's vocal organs, though they spoke no longer in his name but in their own. Mark records the very words, and not the substance only, of this strange request. Matthew also makes it a direct address (8, 31), while Luke gives it indirectly (8, 32), like the classical historians in reporting very short discourses. *Send us* seems a peremptory demand, but involves a recognition of his power to dispose of them, which Matthew and Luke express by using the verb *permit*, and Mat-

thew by recording the conditional expression, *if thou cast us out. Send us into them*, according to Greek usage, might mean nothing more than *send us in among them*, to remove which ambiguity the words are added, *that we may go into them*, and take possesion of their bodies just as they had entered into the demoniac (Luke 8, 30.) Those who laugh at this request as mere absurdity, and therefore never uttered, only show their incapacity to estimate the craft and cunning which suggested it. Having begged to be left undisturbed and been refused, they now apparently relinquish their pretensions to the human victim, and content themselves with leave to take possession of inferior natures. But this mock humility is only a disguise for their malignant wish to bring reproach and danger on their conqueror and judge. If it be asked, in what sense, and to what extent, could evil spirits take possession of a herd of swine, the answer is, precisely so and so far as the nature of the swine permitted. As that nature was not rational or moral, no intellectual or spiritual influence could be exerted; but the body with its organs and sensations, the animal soul with its desires and appetites, could just as easily be wrought upon by demons as the corresponding parts of the human constitution. The difficulty lies in admitting demoniacal influence at all, and not in extending it to lower animals, so far as they have any thing in common with the higher.

13. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand) and were choked in the sea.

It is not improbable that they expected this request, like the first, to be refused, as they could scarcely hope to conceal from Christ the motive, whether mockery or malice, which had prompted it. But in the exercise of that divine discretion which so often brought good out of evil, making the wrath of men (and devils) to praise him, and restraining the remainder which would not have that effect (Ps. 76, 10), *he immediately permitted them*, and no doubt actively coerced them into doing what they had themselves proposed. *And going out* (from the demoniac, or *having gone out*), *the unclean spirits* (the plural form of the words used above in vs. 2. 8) *entered into the swine*, the very phrase applied by Luke (8, 30) to their possession of the human subject. The reality of this transition was evinced by a violent and sudden movement of the swine in the most dangerous direction, from which instinct, uncontrolled, would have preserved them. *The herd rushed down the precipice* (or overhanging bank, as the Greek word means according to its etymology) *into the sea* (or *lake*), between which and the hills (or highlands) they were feeding. Of all neological absurdities the silliest is the notion that this verse is a poetical description of a madman running through a herd of swine and driving them into the water! To destroy one thus would have been hard enough; but the evangelist describes a simultaneous movement of *about two thousand*, the number

being introduced just here to shut out all perversion or unfounded explanation of the fact recorded. The approximative formula (*about*, in Greek, *as if*) does not imply uncertainty, much less entire ignorance of the exact number, but its perfect unimportance except as the suggestion of too great a number to be thus impelled by any natural or ordinary cause. It is, therefore, no less foolish than irreverent to inquire how Mark (or even Peter) ascertained the number; as if an experienced eye, though without supernatural assistance, would be under the necessity of counting every one in order to discover that there were *about two thousand*. Another circumstance of some importance is that they all without exception perished, an additional proof of supernatural agency in their destruction. *Choked in the sea*, i. e. drowned, the verb denoting any kind of strangling or suffocation, the precise mode being suggested by the added words. The Greek verb is the primitive or simple form of the compounded one metaphorically used in 4, 7. 19, as another compound of the same is by Matthew (13, 7) in a different connection, and by Luke (8, 33) in this, where Matthew less specifically says (8, 32) that they *died* (or *perished*) *in the waters*.

14. And they that fed the swine fled, and told (it) in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.

*And those feeding them fled*, astonished and alarmed at the sudden loss of their whole charge, *and reported*, carried back word to the place from which they came, i. e. *into the town* (or *city*), where the owners of the swine resided (compare Luke 15, 15), *and into the fields* (or *country*) through which they passed on their way thither; *and they* (the owners, or the people generally, Matt. 8, 34, both in town and country) *came out* (to the lake-shore, where these strange occurrences had taken place) *to see* (for themselves) *what is the* (thing) *done* (or *happened*.)

15. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

*And they come* (at once and no doubt in a crowd) *to Jesus* (to whom the loss had been ascribed by the report), but here their wonder at the strange death of the swine is lost for the moment in a sight still more surprising. *And they see* (or as the Greek verb more emphatically signifies, *behold*, survey, contemplate as a spectacle) *the possessed* (literally *demonized* one, see above, on 1, 32.) *Sitting*, not as a matter of course or unimportant circumstance, but sitting still like others, instead of raving and roving as he did before (v. 3); one of the strongest proofs that could be given of his restoration. *Clothed* (or *dressed*), not naked or in rags (Luke 8, 27), another clear proof of the same great change, the reality of which is then asserted in a single word, equivalent to four in English. *Sober*, sane, sound-minded, as op-

posed to all forms of insanity (compare Rom. 12, 3. 2 Cor. 5, 13. Tit. 2, 6. 1 Pet. 4, 7.) The verbal form of the original in all these places cannot be expressed without periphrasis in the translation. This sight was the more astonishing because they recognized at once in this calm, decently dressed, well-behaved man, the famous maniac who had so long been a terror to the country (Matt. 8, 28), *the (one) having had (or who had had) the legion* (or the host of demons), i. e. had them in him and united with him while they had him in possession and in bondage (see above, on 3, 22.) *And they were frightened*, terrified, not merely filled with dread of further loss, or of bodily damage to themselves, but *awe-struck*, seized with that religious terror which arises even in the irreligious, upon any striking indication of a super-human power or the presence of superior beings.

16. And they that saw (it) told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and (also) concerning the swine.

In addition to the first report by which they had been brought together, they now receive upon the spot a more detailed account from those who were eye-witnesses of the transaction. This is more natural, as well as more grammatical, than to explain the aorists as pluperfects (*and they had told*), which is at once a needless repetition and a violent construction. *Those seeing* (or *who saw*) may be either the swineherds mentioned in v. 14, who must then be supposed to have returned with their employers and the multitude; or other spectators of the miracle, of whom there is no mention in the context, unless the more detailed account here mentioned be referred to the disciples or the boatmen (Matt. 8, 27), by whom Jesus was accompanied across the lake. *Told*, an entirely different verb from that in v. 14, which means to report, or carry back, whereas this means to go through with, to recount completely, as distinguished from the hurried and confused report which would be given by the swineherds in their first amazement and alarm. This more accurate account included both parts of the strange transaction. They related *how it happened* (not merely what had taken place, but by what agency it was effected) *to the demonized (man)*, the possessed (one), the demoniac. They also related all *about* (or concerning) *the swine*.

17. And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.

The effect upon the multitude of what they saw and heard is now recorded. *They began* (i. e. at once, without deliberation or delay) *to entreat* (exhort, invite) *him*, the same verb that is employed above, in vs. 10, 12, and above in 1, 40. *To go away from their coasts*, in the old English sense of borders, bounds, or confines, often put for all that is contained within them. This is so unlike the usual effect of our Lord's miracles and teachings that it seems to call for explanation, which may

be derived from two considerations. The first is, that the miracle, although a signal miracle of mercy to the demoniac himself, was one of injury and loss to the owners of the swine; so that the whole mass of the population (Luke 8, 37) was not only filled with awe, but apprehensive of some more extensive damage. The other is that Gadara was a Gentile city (see above on v. 1), and the great mass of the Gadarenes throughout the district either wholly heathen or extensively mixed with them. Now, although the influence exercised by Christ was not necessarily confined to Jews, yet as his mission was to them (see below, on 7, 24, and compare Matt. 15, 24), and they alone could fully understand his claims as the Messiah, it is not surprising that a Gentile population should have been less favourably impressed by this one miracle, the benefits of which extended only to a single individual, or at most to the circle of his friends, whereas the incidental evils, either actual or apprehended, were more general.

18. And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.

*And he entering* (or *embarking*), i. e. as he did so, *in the boat* (which brought him, and was no doubt waiting for him), thus complying instantly with the inhospitable and impolite request of the inhabitants, and showing how far he was from wishing to obtrude his presence or his ministry, in either of its great essential functions, upon those who were unwilling to receive them. *The possessed* (or *demonized*) one, i. e. he who had been so, a nice distinction clearly indicated by the form of the Greek participle, although not expressible without circumlocution in a modern version. *Prayed him*, the same verb that is employed in the preceding verse, *that he might be with him*, a fine stroke in this most interesting picture, and susceptible of several explanations, not exclusive of each other. That he feared a relapse or repossession, and depended wholly on his great deliverer to save him from it, is a most natural and probable assumption (compare Matt. 12, 45. Luke 11, 26.) But if this were all, it would hardly have been so expressed (*that he might be with him*.) The words used necessarily suggest a higher motive, though by no means unconnected with the one first mentioned. This was the desire to be with Christ from personal attachment, springing out of gratitude for what he had experienced, and that saving faith which seems to have so commonly accompanied his miracles of healing (see above, on 2, 5, 10.) There is certainly nothing to forbid, and much to recommend the supposition of this twofold cure, corporeal and spiritual, wherever it is not excluded in express terms or by necessary implication. A third motive, not to be neglected, is the seeming wish to disavow the act of his compatriots, by requesting that, as they would not receive the Lord, the Lord would receive him, and separate him from them.

19. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto  
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him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

*And (or but) he did not permit him,* give him leave, or let him go, the same use of the Greek verb as in 1, 34, elsewhere meaning simply to leave (1, 18. 20. 31), to send away (4, 36), or in a figurative sense and moral application, to remit punishment or pardon sin (2, 5-10. 3, 28. 4, 12.) The ground of this refusal is implied in the command which follows. *But (instead of allowing him to do so) he says to him, Go* (go away, depart, as in 1, 44. 2, 11) *into thy house* (so long forsaken by himself but not by others, for he adds) *to thine*, thy own, those belonging to thee. This might be understood as being the whole circle of his friends and kindred, if the preceding phrase be rendered *go home*, as the English version gives it here, though not in 2, 1. 3, 19, where it is the true sense of the indefinite expression, while in this place the specific form (*the house of the*) requires a corresponding definiteness of translation. *And announce according to the common text, the same* verb that occurs above in v. 14, but according to the latest critics, a different compound, all three being rendered by the one verb *tell*. *How great things*, perhaps referring both to bodily and spiritual mercies. *The Lord*, an ambiguous expression, really describing Christ himself, but which the hearers may have understood more vaguely, as denoting God, perhaps with special reference to his covenant relations with his people, as expressed by the Hebrew name *Jehovah*, for which the constant equivalent or rather substitute both in the Septuagint and the New Testament, is (*ó kúrios*) the Lord. *And had mercy on thee*, a suggestion of his own unworthiness and the freeness of the favour which he had experienced. The Greek verb is different from that in 1, 41, which properly denotes the feeling of pity or compassion.

20. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him. And all (men) did marvel.

The departure in this case from our Lord's usual practice of inviting or permitting men to follow him, not only as apostles (1, 17. 18. 20. 2, 14), but also as disciples (Matt. 8, 19. 22), must have had its reasons, two of which may be conjectured. The first is, that the nature of the case required it; the demoniac having been so long an outcast from society, it was important that he should return to his old associations, as a proof of real and complete recovery. The other reason is suggested by the verse before us, namely, that our Lord availed himself of this man's agency to spread the knowledge of his miracles throughout that region, the inhabitants of which refused to tolerate his presence. However this may be, he did in fact *go away*, proclaiming what had taken place and thereby exciting universal wonder. This he did, not only in his own city and its territory, but throughout the whole adjacent region to the south-east of the lake and east of Jordan, here called *Decap-*

*olis* (or *Ten Towns*), which seems to be rather a popular than a political designation. Hence the lists of these ten cities given by Pliny, and Ptolemy, differ as to two, but agree in eight, Scythopolis (according to Josephus the largest), Gadara (see above, on v. 1), Gerasa (supposed to be referred to in Matthew 8, 28), Pella (to which the Christians fled at the destruction of Jerusalem), Hippos, Dion, Philadelphia, Canatha. Of these Scythopolis alone was on the west side of the lake and river. The generic title may have had its origin in temporary civil or municipal arrangements, but more probably arose as a convenient designation of a district otherwise without a common name. The question is of no exegetical importance, as the only thing essential to the meaning of the passage is the undisputed fact, that this new proclamation of the gospel took place in a certain part of Palestine where Christ himself had not proclaimed it, nay, in which he was forbidden by the people so to do. Thus the miracle in question, while it led directly to his exclusion from this province, incidentally supplied his place by a zealous and devoted substitute, who would also have it in his power to counteract, if necessary, any false impressions with respect to the destruction of the swine. Our Saviour's agency in this destruction is not to be vindicated on the ground that Jews had no right to keep swine and were therefore justly punished by the loss of them. Even admitting that these men were Jews, their violation of the law would hardly have been punished so circuitously and without the slightest intimation of their crime. The act was one of sovereign authority, attested by the miracle itself, and so far as we can learn, not disputed even by the persons injured, however much they might lament their loss and wish to avoid its repetition. There is no more need of any special vindication here than in the case of far more serious inflictions of the same kind by disease or accident. The personal presence of the Saviour could not detract from his divine right to dispose of his own creatures for his own ends, even if these ends were utterly unknown to us, much less when they are partially perceptible. For, however sciolists and sceptics may deride this occurrence as absurd and unworthy of the Saviour, it answered an important purpose, that of showing his dominion over every class of objects (see above, on v. 12), and of proving the reality of personal possessions, by exhibiting a case, in which the demons, abandoning the human subject whom they had so long tormented, and leaving him entirely free from all unnatural excitement, instantaneously betrayed their presence and their power in a multitude of lower animals, impelling them, against their own instinctive dispositions, to a sudden simultaneous movement ending in their own destruction. Admitting the external facts to be as Mark describes them, they are wholly unaccountable except upon the supposition of a real dispossession such as he affirms, and the extraordinary novelty of which, without discrediting his narrative, explains his having given a conspicuous place in it to this signal proof of superhuman power.

21. And when Jesus was passed over again by ship

unto the other side, much people gathered unto him: and he was nigh unto the sea.

From this brief visit to the Gadarenes, intended for a special purpose just explained, our Lord returns to Galilee and to his own city (Matt. 9, 1), where great numbers were expecting him (Luke 8, 40.) *Jesus having crossed (or passed over)*, a verb derived from the adverb (*across, beyond*), commonly employed to designate the east side of the lake and river (as in 3, 8. 4, 35. 5, 1), but here the western side, to which, as a relative expression, it is equally appropriate. *By ship*, literally, *in the boat*, i. e. the one in which he had departed, and on which he is said (in v. 18) to have embarked on his return. *Again*, in reference to the transit mentioned in the close of the last chapter and the opening of this (4, 25. 5, 1.) *To the other side, or to the (part) beyond*, i. e. the west side of the lake from which he had set out. *There was gathered a great crowd to him*, or rather *upon him*, implying not mere numbers but close pressure (see above, on 2, 2. 3, 9. 10. 4, 1.) *And he was by (or along) the sea* (the lake of Galilee), on which Capernaum was situated (see above, on 1, 21.)

22. And behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet,

*And behold* (or *lo*), an interjection used to introduce something new and unexpected (see above, on 1, 2. 3, 32. 4, 3), which is here the narrative of two great miracles, woven together in the history as they were in fact, the one having been performed by Christ while on his way to work the other. In the mean time, as we learn from Matthew (9, 17) the discourse to John's disciples about fasting took place, which by Mark is given earlier (2, 18-22), not from any disagreement as to dates, but in order to complete his account of Christ's relation to the various classes, both of friends and foes, with whom he came in contact. Compared with this design the mere chronology was unimportant, though preserved by Matthew who had no such purpose. *There comes*, in the present tense, more graphic than the form employed by Luke (8, 41) and Matthew (9, 18.) *One of the archi-synagogues* (or *rulers of the synagogue*), i. e. one of the national hereditary elders of the Jews, among whose functions was the local conduct of religious discipline and worship (see above, on 1, 21. 39. 3, 1.) The idea of a separate organization and a distinct class of officers appears to have arisen after the destruction of Jerusalem, and could not therefore be the model of the Christian Church which had its pattern not in later Jewish institutions, but in the permanent essential part of the old theocracy, including its primeval patriarchal eldership, one primarily founded upon natural relations or the family government and thence transferred not only to the Jewish but to the Christian church-organization. Of such rulers there was always a plurality in every neighborhood, but not a bench or council of elective officers, uniform in number, as in the later syna-

gogues, when the dispersion of the people had destroyed the ancient constitution and the present synagogue arrangement had been substituted for it. But as this arrangement is without divine authority, nothing is gained but something lost by tracing the New Testament church polity to this source, instead of tracing it back further to the presbyterial forms of the theocracy itself. The elders, who were *ex officio* rulers of the synagogue, i. e. directors of its discipline and worship, had, both by birth and office, the highest rank and social position. This application for assistance therefore came from the most respectable and influential quarter. *By name Jairus (Jaeiros)*, the old Hebrew name *Jair* (Num. 32, 41. Deut. 3, 14. Judg. 10, 3. 1 Chr. 2, 22. 20, 5. Esth. 2, 5), with a Greek and Latin termination. This particular has been preserved by Mark and Luke (8, 41) but not by Matthew (9, 18), showing how far the others are from merely abridging or transcribing him. *And seeing him*, i. e. as soon as he came in sight of Jesus, or as soon as he was pointed out to him, which would of course imply that he had never before seen him, not a probable assumption in the case of a religious ruler at the very centre of our Saviour's operations, who had many opportunities of seeing him both in the synagogue (1, 21. 39. 3, 1) and elsewhere. Intermediate between these explanations is a third perhaps more natural than either, namely, that though Jairus knew our Lord by sight, the crowd prevented him for some time from distinguishing his person. *Falls at his feet*, still in the present tense, as though the scene were actually passing. This is not to be explained as an act of adoration, or religious worship properly so called, but as a natural gesture of importunate entreaty. See above, on v. 6, where the expression is still stronger, as it is here in Matthew (9, 18.)

23. And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death : (I pray thee,) come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed ; and she shall live.

*And besought him much*, literally *many (things)*, i. e. in many words, or perhaps with many arguments, the very phrase employed above in v. 10. *Saying that*, a peculiar Greek use of the particle in direct quotations altogether foreign from our idiom, and therefore necessarily omitted in the version here, and in 1, 15. 37, 40. 2, 12. 3, 11. 21. 22. 28, in all which cases it is equivalent to *then, as follows*, or the like, in English. *Little daughter* is in Greek one word, a beautiful diminutive, formed on a regular analogy, but only found in Athenæus, and applied here, as a term of fond affection, to an only daughter, if not to an only child (Luke 8, 42.) *Lieth at the point of death*, a highly idiomatic English paraphrase of two Greek words which if closely rendered (*lastly* or *extremely has*) would be unmeaning. The adverb is equivalent to the Latin *in extremis*, and the English *in extremity*, and some regard the whole phrase as a Latinism (*in extremis est*) ; but half of it (*has for is*) is purely Greek, and all of it

is found in Diodorus Siculus, and with another verb both in that writer and Polybius. The sense is clearly that expressed in our translation. Between this clause and the next, an intermediate thought may be supplied. (I tell thee this, or come to thee) *that thou mayest come*, &c. This is better than *I pray thee*, in the English Bible, which attenuates the meaning of the particle (*īwa*, not merely *that*, but *so that* or *in order that*) and changes the subjunctive into an imperative. *That coming thou mayest lay* (impose) *on her the hands*, implying a belief that personal presence and corporeal contact were essential to the cure; an error which our Saviour seems in this case to have overlooked, though he rebuked it and corrected it in others. (Compare John 4, 46-54.) *So that* (or in *order that*), a different conjunction from the one in the preceding clause, but here substantially equivalent in meaning. *She may* (or *might*) *be saved*, i. e. from death, which seemed so imminent, that, unless miraculously rescued, she was dying (Luke 8, 42), or might even be described as just dead (Matt. 9, 18.) *And she shall live* is not superfluous, but expresses both the sense in which he wished her to be *saved*, and his confidence that such would be the issue, if the Lord would come and lay his hands upon her.

24. And (Jesus) went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

*And he* (Jesus being found in no Greek manuscript, and needlessly supplied in the translation) *went away* (from the place where he had landed, or was standing with the multitude) *with him* (i. e. Jairus, which might just as well have been supplied as Jesus), *and much people* (literally, *crowd* or *rabble*) as denoting not mere numbers but promiscuous gathering, and throng or pressure (see above, on v. 21, &c.) The idea is, that many crowded after him, an instance of the way in which our Lord was constantly surrounded and accompanied in all his movements, and explaining why he now and then escaped into the desert, not for mere repose, but for devotional retirement (see above on 1, 35.) The crowd not only *followed him*, but *thronged* (or *squeezed*) *him*, which devotes no gentle pressure but that they were suffocating, stifling him (Luke 8, 42.) This circumstance is mentioned to explain another afterwards recorded (in v. 31 below), while Matthew omits both, and only speaks of *the disciples* following (9, 19), which may however mean the large class of his hearers, probably a vast majority, who came to learn of him and believed his doctrines. (See above, on 2, 15-18. 3, 7. 9. 4, 34.)

25. And a certain woman which had an issue of blood twelve years,

While on his way to the house of Jairus he performs a miracle, the history of which is here inserted into that of the other by the three evangelists, precisely as it happened, a strong proof of authenticity and vivid recollection on the part of the eye-witnesses. *A certain woman* whose name, as usual, is not recorded (see above, 1, 23. 30. 40. 2, 3.

3, 1. 5, 2), that of Jairus being mentioned (not his daughter's), on account of his official character and public station. *Being in a flow of blood, or hemorrhage*, the verbal root of which term in a participial form is here employed by Matthew (9, 30.) The precise nature of the malady, beyond this general description, is of no importance, even to physicians, much less to the mass of readers and interpreters. Instead of dwelling upon this point, the evangelists direct attention to its long continuance (*twelve years*) and hopeless state, as represented in the next verse.

26. And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

*And having suffered* (i. e. who had suffered) *many (things)*, not only from the malady itself, but *from many physicians*, which implies the existence of a medical profession, and of numerous practitioners, whose failure to relieve this sufferer no more argues a low condition of the healing art than similar results at this day in the hospitals or private practice of the most eminent physicians and surgeons both of Europe and America. *And having spent the (things) belonging to her*, literally, (coming or proceeding) *from her*, a peculiar phrase applied to persons in 3, 21 above and there explained. *All* has peculiar emphasis because not prefixed as an ordinary epithet, but added as a kind of supplement or afterthought, a species of construction both common and effective in Greek composition (see above, on 4, 5. 15. 16. 17. 29), although seldom reproducible in any version. She had spent her substance, yes the whole of it, in this way. Such a price she might have been content to pay for a restoration, but it seems to have been thrown away. *Nothing bettered*, literally *benefited, profited*, i. e. in this connection, not improved in health. But even this was not the worst of her deplorable condition. Besides expending all that she possessed, which seems to have been no contemptible estate, without receiving any advantage in return, she had actually lost in health as well as purse. *But having rather come into a worse* (condition), i. e. of body, as appears from the antithesis with *nothing bettered* in the clause preceding. Here again, the case described not only bears self-evident credentials of its truth and origin in real life, but meets a melancholy echo in the every-day experience of modern times, showing not only the substantial sameness of the ills which flesh is heir to, but the wise and gracious adaptation of the remedies, both moral and physical, which God prescribes not to imaginary or ideal cases, but to those under which the race has groaned in every country and in every age.

27. When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment:

*Hearing (now) or having heard (before) of (about, concerning) Jesus, either as having wrought extraordinay cures, or as being now*

again at hand or in the neighbourhood. *Coming in the press* (i. e. the crowd or throng) *behind*, or more exactly *from behind*, i. e. approaching him in that direction, not by chance or from necessity, but for the purpose of escaping observation. *She touched his garment*, not his clothes in general, which is the meaning of the plural in the next verse, but the robe or gown, which forms the outer garment in an oriental dress, and which the Greek word in the singular denotes. What she touched was not only this external garment, but its very edge or border (Luke 8, 44), showing that her object was mere contact, so that the slightest and most superficial touch would be sufficient. It is important, though it may be difficult, to realize the situation of this woman, once possessed of health and wealth, and no doubt moving in respectable society, now beggared and diseased, without a hope of human help, and secretly believing in the power of the Christ, and him alone, to heal her, yet deterred by some natural misgiving and by shame, perhaps connected with the nature of her malady, from coming with the rest to be publicly recognized and then relieved. However common-place the case may seem to many, there are some in whose experience, when clearly seen and seriously attended to, it touches a mysterious chord of painful sympathy.

28. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

That she was not actuated merely by a sort of desperate curiosity, as might have been suspected from her previous history and present conduct, but by real confidence in Christ's ability to heal her, we are expressly taught by being made acquainted with her inmost thoughts before her purpose was accomplished. *For she said* (or *was saying*, as she made her way with difficulty through the crowd), i. e. not to others and aloud, but to or in herself (Matt. 9, 21) (*ὅτι, that*, superfluous in English, see above, on v. 23.) *If I touch, not may touch*, which suggests too strongly the idea of permission or of lawfulness, whereas the Greek expresses that of mere contingency. *But*, i. e. only, even, an expressive compound particle in Greek which occurs again below (6, 56.) *His clothes*, the plural of the word explained above (on v. 27), and denoting the whole dress or any part of it. It is a slight but touching stroke in this inimitable picture, that she did not even choose the hem of his outer garment as the part which she would touch, but came in contact with it as it were by chance, desiring only to touch any of his clothes, no matter which or what. *I shall be whole*, literally *saved*, i. e. from this disease and this condition. The Greek verb is the one translated healed in v. 23, a needless variation, and indeed injurious to the beauty of the passage, as it mars the correspondence of these two expressions of reliance upon Christ, uttered almost simultaneously by persons probably entire strangers to each other.

29. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in (her) body that she was healed of that plague.

*And immediately*, Mark's favourite expression (see above, on 4. 5. 15. 16. 17. 29), but as usual denoting an important fact, to wit, the instantaneous effect of that believing but almost despairing touch. It is strikingly described both by Matthew (9. 22) and by Luke (8. 44), and by the latter as some think with professional or technical precision, but by neither with such fulness and minuteness as by Mark, who has perhaps preserved to us the vivid recollection of Peter, whom we know to have been close at hand (see below, on v. 31.) *Dried up* (or *out*, exhausted) was the fountain of her blood, the hidden source of her long sufferings, which all the skill of her "many physicians" had not availed to discover, much less to arrest. *And she knew in the body*, by her bodily sensations, not by mere conjecture or assurances from others, that she is healed (or healing, being healed), another beautiful allusion to the scene as actually passing. *From the plague* (or *scourge*), a figure used above in 3, 10, and there explained

30. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

*And immediately*, as promptly as the touch had acted on the woman's body, or perhaps at the same moment. *Knowing* (or *perceiving*) in himself, without external indication or suggestion, not by bodily sensation but by intuition. *That virtue had gone out of him*, or rather, knowing in himself the power (or influence) proceeding from him, not the bare fact that it had gone out, as the version seems to mean, but what it was that had gone out; and knowing it, not afterwards but at the moment. The idea of some writers that he knew by an unusual sensation that a magical virtue had gone forth from him without his previous knowledge or volition, may be founded partly on the use of the word *virtue* in the common version to translate the ordinary term for *power*, and the construction of the participle so as to refer it too exclusively to what was past; but it is also founded on a false and mystical conception of the healing power exercised by Christ as something magical or any thing beyond a mere act of his will, implying perfect knowledge and deliberate design in every such exertion of divine prerogative. *Turning* or *being turned*, in Greek a passive form, but with an active or deponent sense. *In the press* (or *crowd*), by which he was completely hemmed in and urged onward, so that the act here described was difficult, and to any other would perhaps have been impossible. *He said, who touched my clothes* (or *garments*?) There are two false views of this proceeding entertained both by ordinary readers and by learned writers. The first is that the question necessarily implies a want of knowledge or is tantamount to saying, 'I know not, and I wish to know, who touched me.' The absurdity of this rule of construction may be tested by applying it to other cases, for example to judicial or to catechetical interrogation. If the principle be sound, every question put to a witness on a trial, or to a pupil in examination, is an acknowledgment of ignorance in him who asks it.

The other false view is that if our Saviour knew who touched him, then his question lays him open to the worse charge of deception or dissimulation, since his asking it implies that he was ignorant. The same *reductio ad absurdum* as before may be applied to this ethical objection, which proceeds upon the false interpretation of the question above given, and is easily disposed of by a simple substitution of the true analysis or paraphrase which is, ‘I know it, but I wish you to confess it, for your own sake, and as due to me by whom the cure has been effected.’

31. And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me ?

*His disciples*, either in the wide or narrow sense, but probably the latter, as the former would include a large part of the multitude itself. The reference may here be to that body intermediate between this multitude and the twelve apostles, which we find distinguished from both elsewhere. (See above on 4, 10.) It will then mean his usual attendants who were nearest to his person even when surrounded by the multitude. *Thou seest the crowd thronging thee*, the same verb that is used above in v. 24, and there explained. *And thou sayest* (or *sayest thou*) the only difference is that between a question and an exclamation, both expressive of surprise or wonder. Nothing could be more natural than this speech of Peter (Luke 8, 45) and the rest, or of Peter as the spokesman of the rest (see above, on 3, 16), on hearing what appeared to be a most unreasonable question, without any means of knowing what it meant or why it had been asked. The effect would have been very different if they had known at that time what they doubtless knew soon afterwards, that when their Master said, *Who touched me?* he meant ‘who touched me just now in the hope and confidence that it would cure an inveterate disease pronounced incurable by all physicians?’

32. And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.

*And he looked round* (*about* is a mere adjunct of the English adverb, to which nothing separately corresponds in Greek) *to see the one*, or *the woman* (as the article is feminine) *having done* (or who had done this) i. e. who had touched his garment for the purpose before mentioned. Here again it is not said that he looked round to see (i. e. discover) who had done it, but to see her who (he knew) had done it; for the very gender of the article and participle ( $\tauὴν ποιήσασαν$ ) shows that he looked round not in doubt but at a definite and certain object. This distinction is by no means unimportant, as it sweeps away the ground of the assertion that our Lord is here described as merely feeling that some influence had gone forth from him, and then trying to dis-

cover what it was or who had been affected by it; an interpretation equally irreverent and ungrammatical.

33. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

However strange the question and the searching look may have appeared to others, there was one who understood them perfectly, because they were addressed to her alone, and intended not to ascertain her person but to make her show herself with due acknowledgments of what she had experienced. *Fearing*, or more exactly, *frightened*, terrified, or rather *awed* (see above, on 4, 41), one of the participles being passive and the other active. *Trembling*, as the outward indication of the inward feeling just described, as if he had said, trembling with fear, or shuddering with awe. This fear was not the dread of punishment or injury, but awful reverence combined with consciousness of unworthiness and some sense of misconduct in endeavouring as it were to steal what the Saviour would so freely have bestowed. *Knowing* (not by information but by conscious ease and felt relief) *what had happened* (or *been done*) *to or for her* (according to the common text, *upon her*, or according to the common version, *in her*.) The reading now preferred expresses the idea of advantage, benefit, not mere locality. *Came and fell before him* (*down* is introduced by the translators, as required by our idiom to express the full sense), literally, *to, at, or against him*, which may either be descriptive of a violent ungovernable movement (compare Matt. 7, 25), or an ellipsis for the fuller phrases elsewhere used of *falling at the feet* (7, 25) or *at the knees* (Luke 5, 8) of any one. The shorter form occurs above (3, 11) and no doubt in the same sense, though the falling here expressed is rather that of deep humiliation and compunction joined with fervent gratitude and love. *And told him all the truth*, i. e. publicly acknowledged why she touched him and with what effect (Luke 8, 47.) This no more implies that he did not previously know it, than our ordinary penitent confessions of sin are intended to inform the omniscient God of our offences.

34. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

We have here an eminent example of our Saviour's divine wisdom and goodness. As he had not asked for information, but to make the subject of the miracle come forward and disclose herself; so even this exposure was intended, not to punish or deprive her of the benefit which she had sought to gain in secret, but by one consummate stroke of justice and of mercy, to reprove her fault and yet reward her faith; requiring her to give God the glory and to come to Christ as others came, but at the same time to assure her of a permanent deliverance from her former sufferings, if not from sin. *Daughter*, not a mere

term of endearment, but a recognition of the new relation which she now sustained to him as one of his own spiritual seed (Isai. 53, 10. Heb. 2, 10.) That this is the true meaning of the term here, may be argued from the general fact that he employs such language elsewhere not as an expression of mere human sympathy but always in relation to those bound to him by spiritual ties (see below, on 10, 24, and compare John 21, 5), and also from the special case of the paralytic at Capernaum, in which the word *child* is connected with the solemn declaration that his sins were pardoned (see above, on 2, 5.) This will enable us to put the right sense on the next clause, which might otherwise be inadequately understood. *Thy faith hath saved thee*, thy reliance on my healing power, although marred by the belief that even contact was required, and still more by the false shame which tempted thee to steal instead of asking, has delivered thee from thy disease; and this deliverance is but a pledge and symbol of a greater salvation wrought by faith in him who came to save his people from their sins (Matt. 1, 21.) *Go in peace*, literally, *depart* (or *go away*) *into peace*, i. e. into a permanent condition of repose and freedom from thy former sufferings, both bodily and spiritual. *And be whole* (sound, healthy) *from thy plague* (or scourge, as in v. 29), i. e. be hereafter or forever, as thou now art, well in soul and body, free from thy disease and from the wrath of God, of which it was the whip or rod wherewith he scourged thee for thy sins.

35. While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's (house certain) which said, Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any further?

Mark now resumes his history of the other miracle, into which this was inserted as a sort of episode, but in its true chronological connection, as appears from this verse. *While he yet spake*, literally, *he yet speaking*, the most certain indication of immediate succession ever used by the evangelists. (See above on v. 22, and compare Matt. 9, 18.) *There came certain* (i. e. some), or more simply and exactly, *they come*, either in the same indefinite sense, or with more specific reference to his servants or the members of his family. *From the ruler of the synagogue*, i. e. from his house, as correctly supplied in the translation, the ruler himself being present already (compare the next verse with verse 24 above.) *Thy daughter is dead*, or, as the Greek form strictly means, *thy daughter died*, some time ago, or just now, as had been expected. *Why troublest* (or *annoyst*) *thou*, the question being really equivalent to a prohibition or dissuasion, *trouble not* (Luke 8, 49.) *The master*, i. e. teacher (*magister*), which is the specific meaning of the Greek word here used, and appears to have become a customary designation of our Lord, implying that the people never lost sight of his claim to be a "teacher come from God," of which his miracles were the credentials (John 3, 2.)

36. As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.

Another beautiful example of the Saviour's kindness. Notwithstanding the deficiency of faith which the ruler had betrayed by insisting on his presence as an indispensable condition of the miracle (see above, on v. 23), he does not even leave him in suspense but hastens to console and reassure him. *Immediately hearing* is in some of the oldest copies *overhearing*, a Greek verb used by Plato in that sense, but by Polybius in that of pretending not to hear, or refusing to listen, disregarding, disobeying, which appears to be its meaning in Matt. 18, 17, but would be wholly inappropriate here, where if genuine it can only mean that Jesus overheard what was privately addressed to Jairus, and without waiting to be told of it, immediately dispelled his fears. *The word that was spoken*, or more exactly, *the word spoken*, not only what was said, but as (or when) they said it, another slight but pleasing indication of the promptness with which he interposed for the relief of the afflicted father. *Be not afraid* (alarmed or frightened), as he no doubt was at this distressing news, i. e. apprehensive that he had applied too late, and that the case was now beyond the reach, not only of all human help, but even of the wonder-working teacher's power. *Only believe*, i. e. continue to believe, as you have done thus far, in my capacity to help you. Or the sense may be, *only believe*, as you have not yet done, that I can raise the dead as well as heal the sick. But this, although it might be latent in the Saviour's words, would not be readily suggested by them to the ruler, until afterwards interpreted by the event.

37. And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

*And he suffered*, let, permitted, the verb used above in v. 19, and there explained. *No man*, literally, *no one*, which is not only more exact but appropriate wherever the Greek word occurs, whereas the other is in some connections most incongruous, for example in Matt. 11, 27. 1 Cor. 2, 11, where it is applied to God. (See above, on 2, 21. 3, 27.) *To follow him*, literally, *to follow with him*, which might here be strictly understood as meaning *to follow Jairus with him* (see Matt. 9, 19); but the original construction rather indicates the sense, *to follow* (so as to be) with him, i. e. to accompany, but still as a dependant or inferior, which meaning is appropriate in the only other place where it occurs in the New Testament (Luke 23, 49), as well as sanctioned by Thucydides and Xenophon. The three apostles are here named in the order of their first or rather second vocation (see above, on 1, 16–20), and of their final nomination to the apostolic office (see above, on 3, 16. 17.) John is also here described as *the brother of James* (compare 3, 17), whereas in Acts 12, 2, James is called *the brother of John*. The three thus honoured formed a kind of inner circle of adherents, still

more close and confidential than that of the twelve in which it was included. That it was not a fortuitous selection, or occasioned by some special circumstance in this case, is apparent from its repetition in two other interesting junctures of the Saviour's history, his Transfiguration (see below, on Mark 9, 2) and his Agony (see below, on 14, 33.) In all these cases he desired as much privacy as was consistent with the presence of witnesses (see below, on v. 43.)

38. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

*And he comes, or as the oldest copies read, and they come,* which, from the collocation here, would seem to mean Jesus and Jairus with the three apostles only. But from Luke's account (8, 51) it appears more probable that the selection of the three was made after their arrival at the house, which is entirely consistent with Mark's statement although not so readily suggested by it. Matthew omits the message from the ruler's house and the selection of the three apostles, while Mark and Luke give both, a striking proof that Matthew did not furnish their materials. *And he sees,* beholds, as something strange and unexpected (see above, on v. 15) *a tumult*, uproar, clamour, such as commonly attend an oriental funeral, although the child was scarcely dead. Early burial was usual among the ancient Jews, because it was not properly interment, but a deposit of the body, frequently unconfined, in tombs erected above ground, or lateral excavations in the rock, where the risk of death by premature burial was much less than it is among ourselves. Compare Acts 5, 6. 10, where an additional security against such a mistake existed in the certain knowledge which the apostles had, that Ananias and Sapphira were completely dead. *And (people) weeping and wailing (or howling),* a verb derived from *alala*, the ancient war-ery, and employed by Euripides and Xenophon to signify the act of raising it, but by the former also in the sense of crying out for pain, from which the transition is an easy one to the cries of mourners, and especially of the mourning women hired in the east to attend funerals. *Greatly,* literally, *many (things)*, i. e. much, perhaps with some allusion to the variety of sounds as well as the amount of noise. (See above, on vs. 10. 23, and compare 3, 12.) Besides these cries there was funeral music, as usual on such occasions (Matt. 9, 23.)

39. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

*And coming in, or as he came in; when he was come in* suggests an interval, whereas the entrance and the speech appear to have been simultaneous. *He says to them,* the mourners thus employed in noisy lamentation. *Why make ye this ado,* a nearly obsolete word meaning

bustle, trouble, here employed to render one which rather means disturbance, noise and tumult, being the cognate verbal form of the noun rendered *tumult* in the verse preceding. The question, as usual in such connections, implies censure, or at least expostulation, as if he had said, ‘what right or reason have you to make this disturbance, which would only be appropriate in a case of real death, but this child,’ &c. Thus understood, the question virtually included or was really accompanied or followed by an exhortation not to weep (Luke, 8, 52) and a peremptory order to withdraw (Matt. 9, 24.) *Damsel* is in Greek of neuter form and common gender, being strictly a diminutive of one which means both *boy* and *girl*, and therefore nearly equivalent to *child*, though not the one employed 2, 6 above, and there explained. The connection, not the form, determines it in this place to denote a little girl. *Is not dead*, or *did not die* (when ye supposed), the same form that is used above in v. 35. *But sleeps*, is sleeping, or asleep, the present tense denoting actual condition, as the aorist before it, strictly understood, denotes a previous occurrence. *She did not die but sleeps*. These words admit of two interpretations, each of which has had its advocates. The first assigns to them their strictest and most obvious sense, to wit that this was merely an apparent death, but really a case of stupor, trance, or syncope, which might, almost without a figure, be described as a deep protracted slumber. The other gives a figurative sense to both expressions, understanding by the first that she really was dead but only for a time and therefore *not dead* in the ordinary acceptation of the term; and by the second that her death, though real, being transient, might be naturally called a sleep, which differs from death chiefly in this very fact and the effects which flow from it. This last is now very commonly agreed upon by all classes of interpreters, German and English, neological and Christian, as the only meaning which the words will fairly bear. In favour of this sense is the fact that Jesus used the same expression with respect to Lazarus and expressly declared that in that case sleep meant death (John 11, 11-14), to which may be added that Mark is here recording signal miracles as proofs of Christ’s extraordinary power, and that a mere restoration from apparent death would not have been appropriate to his present purpose. One of the best German philological authorities has paraphrased our Saviour’s words as meaning, ‘Do not regard the child as dead, but think of her as merely sleeping, since she is so soon to come to life again.’

40. And they laughed him to scorn. But, when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

*And they* (i. e. the company, or those whom he had thus addressed) *laughed at him* (or *against him*), i. e. at his expense, or in derision of him. This idea is expressed in the English version by the added words,

*to scorn*, which though not expressed in the original are not italicized because supposed to be included in the meaning of the compound Greek verb which, according to another usage of the particle with which it is compounded, might be understood to mean, *they laughed him down*, or silenced him by their derision. Luke adds (8, 53), *knowing that she was dead* (or *did die*), an expression which the writer would not have employed if they had been mistaken in so thinking. *But he, having cast out* (i. e. forcibly excluded, or at least peremptorily dismissed) *all* (the mourners, those who were the authors of the uproar), *takes along* (with him, or in his company, compare the same verb as employed above, 4, 36, and below, 9, 2, 10, 32, 14, 33.) *Those with him* (when he came), i. e. the three apostles named in v. 37. *He goes in* (graphically represented as an act now passing) *where the child was* (already) at the time of his arrival. *Lying* is omitted by the latest critics, as an unauthorized addition to the text, supposed by some transcriber to be needed to complete the sense. The entrance here described is different from that in vs. 38, 39, which was into the house, whereas this is into some inner apartment, probably the large upper room near the roof (*ἐπερῶν*), which seems to have been used on such occasions (compare Acts 9, 37, 39.)

41. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha-cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, (I say unto thee,) arise.

*And seizing*, laying hold, originally mastering, exercising strength or power, in the Greek of the New Testament applied both to friendly and to hostile seizures. (See above, 1, 31, 3, 21, and below, 6, 17, 9, 27, 12, 12, 14, 1, 44-51.) In condescension to the weakness of the father's faith, our Lord establishes a visible communication between his own person and that of the subject upon whom the miracle was to be wrought. For the same reason he made use of audible expressions serving to identify himself as the performer. These expressions, in the present case, have been preserved, not only in a Greek translation, but in their Hebrew or Aramaic form as originally uttered. This is one of the characteristic features of Mark's Gospel, commonly referred to the vivid impression made by certain words of Christ upon the memory of Peter, by whom, according to the old tradition, they were made known to the evangelist. Though not historically certain, this hypothesis accounts for the otherwise extraordinary fact, that these *ipsissima verba* of the Saviour, in his native tongue and that which he employed in his instructions, are recorded for the most part, not by an apostle and eye-witness, such as John or Matthew, but by one who, although gifted with an equal inspiration, personally holds a secondary place among the sacred writers. It is also worthy of remark that these original expressions are most frequent in a book primarily written for the use of Gentile and particularly Roman readers, which may be the reason of its many latinisms both of diction and construction, its still more numerous explanations of localities and Jewish customs, and

its careful Greek translations of the Aramaic formulas in question, of which we have an instance in the verse before us. *Talitha*, an Aramaic noun of Hebrew origin, in the feminine emphatic form. *Koumi*, a corresponding verbal form, the feminine imperative *kal*, which is the same in both Semitic dialects. These two words must have long rung in the ears and dwelt upon the memory of those who witnessed this first recorded miracle of resuscitation. For the benefit of those who did not understand the eastern tongue, the words are accurately rendered into Greek. *Damsel*, not the word so rendered in v. 39, though like it a diminutive of (*κοπη*) *girl*, as that is of the common noun (*παιδις*), meaning either boy or girl. The former is confined in the older classics to the dialect of common life, as a familiar term of fondness and endearment; but the later writers use it in the more serious and elevated style. *I say to thee* forms no part of the text, though it may be an expression actually used upon the same occasion but recorded here in Greek alone. Or it may be inserted simply to give emphasis and point to the address as uttered in a tone of authority and in his own name as entitled to command. *Arise, or rouse (thyself)*, the middle voice (or reciprocal form) of a verb which strictly means to awaken out of sleep. It might even be translated here *awake*, which makes it still more striking and appropriate as addressed to one whom Christ himself had just before described as being not dead but sleeping.

42. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was (of the age) of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.

*And immediately*, Mark's favourite adverb, doubled here by several of the oldest manuscripts, which have it in the last clause also. It marks the important fact that in this, as in all other cases except those where a gradual process is expressly mentioned, the recovery of health was instantaneous without any interval of convalescence; while this essential fact remains the same, there is a beautiful distinction in the acts by which it was attested. While Peter's wife's mother, as the mistress of a household, showed her perfect restoration by immediately resuming her domestic duties, so the young girl, in the case before us, proved the same thing when she simply *walked about* the house or chamber where she had been lying dead. From the previous narrative, as found in Mark, it might have been supposed that she was a mere infant, to correct which error and account for her walking, Mark inserts at this point what was stated by Luke earlier (8, 42), to wit, that she was twelve years old. *And they*, the witnesses, especially her parents (Luke 8, 56), *were amazed with great amazement*, the verb used above in 2, 12. 3, 21, and there explained.

43. And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something shiould be given her to eat.

Mark here describes our Lord as exercising that divine discretion which in every case determined whether the publication of his miracles required to be stimulated or retarded, though the grounds of the distinction may be now, and may have been at first, inscrutable to human wisdom. The very verb translated *charged*, by its etymology, suggests the idea of distinction or discrimination, and may be employed here for the purpose of reminding us that this discouragement of public rumours rested upon no fixed law or general rule but on the wisdom and authority of him who uttered it. Matthew's omission of this circumstance, and substituted statement, that his fame went out into all that land, might have seemed contradictory to that of Mark and Luke (8, 56), as some interpreters do really affect to think it, if we had not had already (see above, on 1, 45) both these statements made by two evangelists in reference to one and the same case. The last stroke in Mark's picture of this beautiful domestic scene is not to be neglected. *He commanded (literally said or told) to be given (i. e. something to be given) her to eat.* While this shows, upon one hand, his benevolent recollection of the wants of this resuscitated child, which her very mother seems to have forgotten, or the order would have been superfluous; it answers, on the other hand, the still more interesting purpose of exemplifying the important general fact that when a miracle of healing or resuscitation had been wrought, its effect was not only instantaneous and complete in restoring health or life, but left the subject as dependent as he was before upon the ordinary means and sources of subsistence, instead of feeding him, as some might have expected, upon angels' food, or raising him above the vulgar need of being fed at all.



## CHAPTER VI.

THE historian here pauses, in his glowing account of Christ's triumphant manifestation as the true Messiah, to contrast with it a singular exception to the general enthusiasm, namely, his rejection by his earliest acquaintances and neighbours in the synagogue at Nazareth (1-6.) With this rejection he contrasts again the indefatigable labours of the Saviour elsewhere, both in person and by proxy, that is, through the twelve apostles, whose actual going forth is here recorded, with a summary account of his instructions and of their success (7-13.) Among the effects of this multiplied and wide-spread agency, Mark specially describes that produced upon the ruler of Galilee, the murderer of John the Baptist, an event which the historian here goes back to relate (14-29.) Then, resuming his account of our Lord's ministry, he mentions the return of the apostles, their report of their proceedings, and their withdrawing with their master to the desert for the sake of rest (30-32.) But even here they are followed or preceded by an eager crowd, whose

physical and moral wants excite the Saviour's pity and afford occasion for a signal miracle, wholly unlike those previously mentioned, and affording a new proof of his almighty power (33-44.) This was immediately succeeded by another, no less new and demonstrative of his dominion over nature (45-52.) To this series of selected and decisive miracles, Mark adds, as if to show that they are merely samples, chosen and presented for a special purpose, a more general account of his miraculous healings in the district of Gennesaret, and of the general attention thus continually re-awakened throughout all that part of Palestine, in which, according to the prophecies, the light of the Messiah's advent was to shine most brightly (53-56.)

1. And he went out from thence, and came into his own country ; and his disciples follow him.

Not the least striking and affecting part of Christ's humiliation was the treatment which he met with from his nearest friends, or those who might have been supposed to be such, either from natural relationship or from long association and acquaintance. We have already met with several indications of imperfect faith and narrow views upon the part of such (see above, on 3, 21. 31) ; but the history of his mission would have been defective without a more detailed account of one extraordinary scene, in which the same thing took place on a larger scale and still more publicly. This was his reception on returning to the place where he had spent his childhood, and from which he came to be baptized in Jordan (see above, on 1, 9.) The precise chronology of this transaction is of little moment except as involved in the question of its identity with that recorded in a different connection by Luke (4, 16-31.) As the scene of both is Nazareth, and the principal incident in both our Lord's rejection by his old acquaintances and neighbours there, the first presumption is of course in favour of their sameness. Even the difference in particulars, especially Mark's silence as to Christ's interpretation of Isaiah, the resentment of the people, and their violent attempt upon his life, might be explained, at least upon the sceptical hypothesis of two incongruous traditions as to one event. But all necessity and pretext for resorting to such explanations, and indeed the whole presumption of identity, are happily removed by Matthew, who affords a parallel to both accounts in very different connections, thus establishing the fact of their diversity. Luke's account of the affair at Nazareth closes (4, 31) with a statement that he went thence to Capernaum, another town of Galilee, which formal and particular description shows that he is speaking of our Lord's removal to that place as the appointed centre of his future operations. Now this same removal is recorded with more brevity by Matthew, in immediate connection with our Lord's withdrawing from Judea into Galilee on John's imprisonment (Matt. 4, 12. 13.) But the same evangelist, much later in his narrative, records a visit and rejection of our Lord at Nazareth, in terms almost identical with those of Mark (Matt. 13, 54-58.) It was therefore a second occurrence

of the same kind, which is so far from being in itself improbable, that it would have been strange and out of keeping with the whole tenor of the Saviour's conduct, if in the course of his perpetual circuits through all Galilee, he never had revisited his old home and renewed the invitations which the people there had once rejected. Luke's silence in relation to this second visit is explained by his particular account of the first, whereas Matthew, having merely noted the removal, without any indication of the reasons, could describe the second visit without irksome repetition. The different connection in which Mark and Matthew introduce this narrative is unimportant, as the mere chronology was nothing to their purpose of exemplifying the reception and effect of our Lord's ministry in various cases. There is no inconsistency, however, Matthew (13, 54) merely saying that he came into his own country, without adding when or whence, while Mark prefixes to these words the statement that *he went out* (or *departed*) *thence*, which can only mean from Capernaum or its neighbourhood, where he had performed the two miracles last recorded (see above, on 5, 21, and compare Matt. 9, 1.) *His country* (fatherland, *πατρίς* from *πατήρ*), not in the wide sense now attached to this term, but in that of native place, ancestral residence. This description applied elsewhere (John 4, 46) to all Galilee, as distinguished from Judea, is here used, with equal propriety, to distinguish one town of Galilee from another. In the same sense that Galilee was his native province, Nazareth was his native town; for though not actually born in either, his parents (Luke 2, 27. 41) had resided there before his birth (Luke 1, 26. 27. 2, 4), and he had been brought up there from his infancy (Matt. 2, 23. Luke 2, 51. 52), so that he was universally regarded as a Galilean and a Nazarene (see above, on 1, 24.) *His disciples*, either in the strict sense of his twelve apostles (see above, on 3, 14), or the wider sense of his believing hearers and habitual attendants (see above, on 4, 10.) *Follow him*, the graphic present tense, which represents the scene as actually passing.

2. And when the sabbath-day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing (him) were astonished, saying, From whence hath this (man) these things? and what wisdom (is) this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

*And it being sabbath* (or the sabbath having come), the Greek verb being not the mere verb of existence, but one meaning strictly to become or to begin to be, and therefore often rendered by the English verbs to happen, come to pass, &c. (see above, on 1, 4. 2, 15. 4, 4. 5, 14. 16. 33, and as to the observance of the sabbath, on 1, 21. 2, 23. 3, 2.) *He began*, not pleonastic but implying interruption, or that he was still employed in this way when the subsequent occurrences took place. (See above, on 1, 45. 2, 23. 4, 1. 5, 17. 20.) *In the synagogue*,

or stated meeting for religious worship, the Greek word, like its English equivalent and several others, such as *church*, *court*, *school*, being sometimes, but not necessarily or always, transferred to the place and even to the building. For a clear view of this natural transition, compare Luke 7, 5, where it could not be the meeting that was built, with Acts 13, 43, where it could not be the building that was broken up. We find here exemplified two of our Lord's habits, that of personal attendance on the synagogue worship, and that of official or authoritative teaching upon such occasions (see above, on 1, 21. 39. 3, 1.) This was allowed partly in accordance with a customary license of instruction, not entirely unknown among the modern Jews, but chiefly on account of Christ's miraculous credentials as a teacher come from God and recognized as such by other teachers even of the highest rank when free from party-spirit and malignant prepossession. (See above, on 1, 22, and compare John 3, 2. 10. 7, 50.) *Many* (or as some old copies read, *the many*, i. e. the majority, the mass) *hearing were struck* (with wonder or amazement), the same phrase and descriptive of the same effect as that recorded in 1, 22, but very different as to the conclusion drawn from it. For in the former case it led the hearers at Capernaum to contrast him as a teacher with the scribes very much to his advantage, while in this his old acquaintances compare his miracles and teachings with his humble origin and early residence among themselves, as a pretext for disparaging if not rejecting his pretensions. This unfriendly prepossession is expressed indirectly by their sneering questions. *Whence to this (one) these (things)? i. e. how has he obtained them? What (is) the wisdom, the (wisdom) given to him, i. e. imparted from above, thereby acknowledging his inspiration, but not without a sneer at his wisdom as belonging to another rather than himself. That (or, according to the latest critics, and) such (or so great) powers (i. e. proofs of superhuman power) by (or through) his hands (or instrumental agency) are done (or come to pass,* the same verb that is used in the first clause and there explained.) They do not venture to deny his wisdom or his miracles, but by wondering at them really bear witness to them. This is only one of many proofs that the reality of Christ's miraculous performances was never called in question either by his unbelieving friends or by his most malignant enemies (see above, on 3, 22.) That this admission left them inexcusable both intellectually and morally for not receiving Jesus as the true Messiah, far from proving that they could not thus have spoken, only shows that their affections, envy, jealousy, and malice, were too strong for their rational convictions, so that in the very act of wondering at the proofs of his divine legation, they rejected and denied it. This inconsistency, instead of being "unpsychological" or contradicted by the laws of human nature, is continually verified in every day's experience, contributing with many other proofs to show the irrationality of unbelief and sin in general.

3. Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, of Joses, and of Judas, and Simon?

and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

The general expression of contemptuous incredulity is followed by a still more invidious allusion to his connections and associations, equivalent to saying, ‘we know all about this boasted wonder-worker and instructor, who and what he is, and whence he drew his origin, that is, among ourselves, to whom he now assumes such vast superiority.’ This is the language not of reason but of passion, since the circumstances mentioned only served to enhance the proof of that superiority which they repined at, though they could not question or deny it. *Is not this the carpenter?* The Greek word sometimes means an artisan or artificer in general, which some lexicographers consider its original import as indicated by its etymology (connecting it with *τέχνη*, *art*), and by its combination with the names of certain metals to denote those who are constantly employed about them. Others explain this as a mere occasional extension of the usual and strict sense, which is that of any workman in wood, and still more specifically, a carpenter or joiner, which an uniform tradition represents as Joseph’s occupation. It is not here spoken of as even a comparatively mean employment, that of building having always been regarded as among the most respectable and even intellectual of manual occupations. There was no intention, on the part of those here speaking, to put Jesus lower than themselves, but simply on a level with them. What they tacitly repudiate is not his claim to be their equal, but their better or superior in an infinite degree. This pretension, though attested by acknowledged miracle and inspiration, they endeavour, in a natural but foolish manner, to invalidate by urging his original equality in rank and occupation with themselves. Or rather it is not an argumentative objection, but a mere expression of surprise, like that which would be felt, though in a less degree, in any obscure neighbourhood, at the appearance of an old acquaintance in the new condition of a rich man or a nobleman. This clause has been unduly pressed by some as proving that our Lord did actually work at the trade of his reputed father. However probable this may be in itself, and however little it may derogate from the Redeemer’s honour, it cannot be certainly inferred from these words, and for several reasons. In the first place, they are not the words of the evangelist himself, but of the people in the synagogue of Nazareth, uttered under great excitement, and directly prompted by their jealousy and envy, which would naturally lead them to exaggerate rather than extenuate the humbling facts of Christ’s original condition. In the next place, the words themselves, when uttered hastily and carelessly, might simply mean the son of Joseph, who was well known as a carpenter among them, just as the sons of foreigners among ourselves, though natives of the soil, are often spoken of as Irishmen or Dutchmen. In the third place, this is actually given as the meaning of the question, if not as its very form, by Matthew (13, 55.) *Is not this the carpenter’s son?* And lastly, though the question is not to be settled upon any sentimental ground or false

assumption that the Son of God would have been any more degraded by this kind of labour than by taking upon him the form of a servant, which includes all possible humiliation free from sin, yet every reader feels that there were other more appropriate employments even in his years of preparation for the work that followed. All this is intended, not to disprove the fact alleged by these unfriendly Nazarenes, but simply to deny that their alleging it, or interrogatively presupposing it, is any demonstration of the fact itself, which may be therefore left to be determined by each reader at his own discretion. *The son of Mary,* added here to discriminate the person of the carpenter referred to, corresponds to a separate demand in Matthew, *Is not his mother called Mary? And (or but) the brother of James, &c.* The immemorial dispute as to the brothers of the Lord has been already mentioned (see above, on 3, 31.) Those who interpret that expression as denoting brothers in the strict sense, i. e. sons of the same mother (*fratres uterinos*), lay great stress upon the passage now before us and its parallel in Matthew (13, 55.) But even taken in the strictest sense it only proves that these were sons of Joseph, not necessarily by Mary, but perhaps by a former marriage, a traditional interpretation running back into remote antiquity. Others insist upon the wide use of *brother*, in the oriental idiom and in Scripture, to denote almost any near relation, whether natural or moral, such as that of fellow-men, otherwise called neighbours (Matt. 5, 22), that of friends and associates (Matt. 5, 47), that of fellow-Jews (Acts 2, 29), that of fellow-Christians (Acts 1, 16), that of fellow-ministers (1 Cor. 1, 1.) A word admitting of such various applications cannot of itself determine which is meant in any given case. Nor is there any principle or general law of language which forbids our giving to the term as here used the same meaning that it obviously has in Gen. 14, 14. 16, that of a near relative or kinsman. The presumption, however, here and elsewhere, is in favour of the strict construction; nor would any have doubted that the brothers of Christ were the sons of Mary, but for certain adventitious and collateral objections to that obvious interpretation. These are chiefly two, the one of great antiquity, the other of more recent date. The first is a repugnance to admit that Mary was the mother of any but of Christ himself. This repugnance, although found in connection with many superstitious notions in the Church of Rome, is not confined to it. Not only do the symbols or standards of the Lutheran and of some Reformed churches teach the perpetual virginity of Mary as an article of faith, but multitudes of Protestant divines and others, independently of all creeds and confessions, have believed, or rather felt, that the selection of a woman to be the mother of the Lord carries with it as a necessary implication that no others could sustain the same relation to her; and that the selection of a virgin still more necessarily implied that she was to continue so; for if there be nothing in the birth of younger children inconsistent with her maternal relation to the Saviour, why should there be any such repugnance in the birth of older children likewise? If for any reason, whether known to us or not, it was necessary that the mother of our Lord should be a virgin when she bore him, what is

there absurd or superstitious in assuming as a part of the divine plan that she should remain a virgin till her death? If, on the other hand, there be no real incongruity in holding that the mother of our Lord was afterwards an ordinary wife and parent, what incongruity would there have been in putting this extraordinary honour on the married state, by choosing one who was already in the ordinary sense a wife and mother? The question is not why it did not please God thus to order it, with which we have no right to intermeddle, but why the same minds which regard the perpetual virginity of Mary as a superstition, shrink with equal superstition from the bare suggestion that Christ might have been born of any but a virgin. The same feeling which revolts from one hypothesis in some revolts from both hypotheses in others, and the difference between them, as to this repugnance, is reduced to that of one and two, before and after, or at most to that of a consistent uniformity and arbitrary variation. After all it is not so much a matter of reason or of faith as of taste and sensibility; but these exert a potent influence on all interpretation, and the same repugnance, whether rational or merely sentimental, which led fathers and reformers to deny that Christ had brothers in the ordinary sense, is likely to produce the same effect on multitudes forever, or until the question has received some new and unequivocal solution. The collateral arguments in this dispute derived from Matt. 1, 25, and John 7, 5, belong to the interpretation of those gospels. The other and more recent ground of opposition to the strict sense of *brother* in the case before us is the theory, by some connected with it, of extraordinary honours paid to one of these uterine brethren as such though not one of the twelve apostles, i. e. James the brother of the Lord, whom Paul groups with John and Peter as a pillar of the church, and even names him first in the enumeration, which is natural enough if he was one of the apostles and the one who specially presided in the church at Jerusalem; but if (as many now maintain) he was one of the Saviour's unbelieving brethren (John 7, 5), converted by our Lord's appearance to him after his resurrection (1 Cor. 15, 7), and then placed upon a level with the twelve an account of his relationship to Christ, the apostolical prerogative is sensibly impaired, and the door thrown open for an endless license of conjecture as to the men who were apostles although not so dignified by Christ himself. An unwillingness to come to this conclusion has undoubtedly confirmed some in the old belief, that the brother of the Lord, of whom Paul speaks, was James the Less or James the son of Alpheus, at once an apostle and a relative of Christ, whether he were such as a nephew of the Virgin Mary, or of Joseph, or a son of Joseph by a former marriage. The additional hypothesis, that James and his brothers lived with Joseph after the decease of their own father, is not a necessary consequence of what has been already said, but merely an ingenious explanation of the fact that these brothers of Christ appear in attendance on his mother as members of her household. (See above, on 3, 31, and compare John 2, 12. Acts 1, 14.) In favour of identifying James the brother of the Lord (Gal. 1, 19) with James the son of Alpheus (see above, on 3, 18), is the singular coincidence of

names between the lists of the apostles and the passage now before us. In all we find a James and a Simon near together, and in Luke's two catalogues a Jude or Judas (not Iscariot), making three names common to the list of the apostles and of Christ's brothers. This may no doubt be fortuitous, the rather as the names were common, and the fourth here mentioned, which was less so, does not appear in any list of the apostles. Still on most minds the coincidence will have some influence, in spite of the objection that in John 7, 5, we are expressly told that his brethren did not believe on him. But if brethren means his near relations, surely some of them might be apostles, while the rest were unbelievers, even granting, what may well be questioned, that by unbelief in John 7, 5, we are to understand an absolute rejection of his claims and doctrines, rather than a weak contracted faith, with which he seems to charge his mother upon one occasion (John 2, 4), and the twelve on many. (See above, on 4, 40, and compare Matt. 6. 30. 8. 26. 14. 31. 16. 8.) *His sisters* is of course to be interpreted according to *his brothers*, the wide and narrow senses being applicable equally to either sex. *Here with us* (literally at us, close to us), i. e. still resident at Nazareth, which probably remained the permanent home even of his mother. *Offended in him*, i. e. made to stumble or without a figure led into sin and error with respect to him. For the origin and meaning of the Greek term see above, on 4, 17.

4. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

Instead of resenting this reception as a personal offence and insult, which it certainly was, our Lord treats it merely as a single instance of a general and familiar fact, that God's most highly honoured instruments and agents are not only liable to be dishonoured by their fellow-men, but to be least respected on the part of those who know them best, and who would seem to be particularly bound to do them honour. The implied reason is that strangers judge of such a person only by his public acts or his official conduct, while his friends and neighbours, even the most friendly, have their minds so occupied with minor matters, that the greater are obscured if not distorted to their view. It is like looking at some noble structure from a distance where itself alone is visible, and near at hand, where the adjoining houses both distract the eye and lower the main object; so that he who sees the most in one sense sees the least in another. This familiar lesson of experience, and as such reduced to a proverbial form, is here applied especially to prophets, either because it had been actually verified in their experience more than that of others, or because it was our Lord's prophetic ministry and office which had been so contemptuously treated by his countrymen.

5. And he could there do no mighty work, save that

he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed (them.)

The sad effect of this reception was the paucity of miracles at Nazareth, compared with those at other towns of Galilee, particularly at Capernaum (see above, on 1, 32. 3, 10.) *He was not able there to do any miracle* (literally, *no power*, as in v. 2.) This cannot literally mean that he had lost the power of working miracles in consequence of their rejecting him, but must be taken either in a moral sense, that he could not do so in consistency with the design and purpose of his mission, or more strictly that he could not for the want of opportunity, because the people, having no faith in his healing power, or disdaining to receive the favours of one whom they knew so well and were so unwilling to acknowledge as superior, did not present themselves as in other places. This is certainly more probable and pleasing than the supposition that our Lord, in this case, refused what he seems to have granted in all others.

6. And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages teaching.

The extraordinary conduct of the Nazarenes is now presented in the strongest manner possible by saying that our Lord himself *wondered at* (or *on account of*) *their unbelief*. To reconcile omniscience with surprise is no part of our privilege or duty. All such seeming contradictions are parts of the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3, 16), the union of humanity and deity in one theanthropic person. However incomprehensible to our finite faculties may be the coexistence in one person of the divine logos and a human soul, the possession of the latter, if conceded, carries with it all the attributes and acts of which a perfect human soul is capable. While to Christ's divinity or eternal spirit there could be nothing new or strange, to his humanity surprise and wonder were familiar, and on no occasion had he seen more to call forth those affections of mind, than when he saw the unbelief of his own countrymen at Nazareth. But far from suffering their strange behaviour to divert him from his purpose, he resumed his missionary circuit or continued it; for he had probably returned to Nazareth, not upon any special errand, but because it came next in his systematic scheme of labour. There is a significant simplicity in Mark's combination of these two things, more expressive than the most elaborate description. It presents to us the Saviour pausing for a moment as it were to wonder at the incredulity of Nazareth, then calmly passing on to his next scene of labour. *He went about*, literally *led about* (1 Cor. 9, 5), a compound form of the verb used in the same way in 1, 38, but never probably (except in Acts 13, 11) without some reference to the leading of others, as in Christ's itinerant surveys of Galilee, to which it is applied not only here but in Matt. 7, 23. 9, 35. *The villages*, here put for towns in general (see above, on 1, 38, and compare Matt. 9, 35.) *In a circle*, or a circuit, that

is, not merely round about (as in 3, 34 above), but on a regular concerted plan of periodical revisitation. These occasional glimpses of the method upon which our Lord conducted his official work are worthy of particular attention, as evincing that he did not work at random or leave any part of Galilee, so far as we can learn, unvisited.

7. And he called (unto him) the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.

Besides continuing his own itinerant ministry, our Lord now takes another step of great importance, by actually sending out the twelve whom he had previously chosen for the twofold purpose of being with him as disciples and going forth from him as apostles (see above, on 3, 14.) It should be observed, however, that the mission here recorded was not the permanent and proper apostolic work, for which they were not qualified until the day of Pentecost (see below, on 16, 20, and compare Luke 24, 49. Acts 1, 41), but a temporary and preliminary mission, to diffuse still more extensively the news of the Messiah's advent and the doctrine of his kingdom, attested by the same credentials which he bore himself. *Began* what he had not yet done, but only prepared the way for. *Two (and) two*, in pairs or couples, for mutual counsel and assistance, in accordance with the maxim of Solomon (Ecc. 4, 9.) This interesting circumstance has been preserved by Mark alone, perhaps on the authority of Peter (see above, on 5, 29), but at all events under a divine direction. *Power*, i. e. derivative or delegated power, *authority*, conferred by a superior, not to be employed promiscuously or at random, but so as to promote the end for which it was bestowed. *Power of unclean spirits*, i. e. relating to them, and by necessary implication, *over* them, which is not expressed however but suggested by the context. *The spirits, the unclean (ones)*, is the form of the original, in which the adjective is added as a qualifying term, because the noun includes all spirits, good and evil, whereas they were to have power only over fallen angels. Here, as elsewhere (see above, on 1, 34. 3, 11), Mark gives special prominence to such dispossessions as the most extraordinary miracles of healing, and as such representing all the rest which were equally included in this apostolical commission (Matt. 10, 1. Luke 9, 2.)

8. And commanded them that they should take nothing for (their) journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in (their) purse:

To this general account of their commission Mark adds a special charge in reference to two points, their equipment for the journey, and their conduct towards the people with whom they came in contact. Luke's account is still more brief (9, 3-5), while Matthew (10, 5-42) seems to put together all the similar directions given to the twelve at any time, in reference not only to this temporary mission, but to their later apos-

tolic journeys. *Commanded* is in Greek a verb originally meaning to announce or pass the word, with special reference to military watchwords, then to any charge or order, but according to the lexicons not in the strongest or most peremptory sense, which is otherwise expressed. *Take*, literally, *take up*, but with special reference to taking away, and then to *carrying* (see above, on 2, 3, 9, 11, 12, 21, 4, 15, 28.) *For their journey*, literally, *into the road* (or way.) *Sure*, except, literally, *if not*. *A staff*, or walking-stick, as used in journeys upon foot to support and ease the traveller. *No scrip*, &c., literally, *not a scrip*, *not bread*, *not money*. *Scrip*, an old word answering to bag, sack, or wallet. *Money*, literally, *brass*, or rather *copper*, said to be the first ore that was wrought, whence the name is sometimes used for metal in general, and sometimes for bronze, or the alloy of copper and tin, but not for what is now called brass, or the alloy of copper and zinc, which is said to have been unknown to the ancients. Copper having been early used for money, the word has sometimes that generic meaning, as it has in this place, with specific reference no doubt to coin of the lowest value, like the plural (*coppers*) among us. *In their purse*, literally, *into the girdle*, the construction implying previous insertion, and the whole phrase a custom, still prevailing in the east, of using the belt, which keeps the flowing dress together, as a purse or pocket. Horace and Livy speak of money in the girdle, and Plutarch connects the very two Greek words employed by Mark.

### 9. But (be) shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.

*But* (introducing a concession) *shod* (literally, *underbound*, bound under with) *sandals*, soles of wood or skin covering the bottom of the feet and fastened with leather straps or thongs. *Not put on*, an unusual variation of the older English form, *put not on*, both equivalent in meaning to our modern phrase, *do not put on*, or clothe yourself with, wear. *Coats*, tunics, shirts, the inner garment of the ancient oriental dress, worn next the skin and reaching to the knees (see above, on 2, 21, 5, 27, and below, on 14, 63.) These particulars, intended to convey the general idea that they were to go without encumbrance and to rely for their subsistence on the public hospitality, are substantially the same in all the evangelists, except that Luke includes the *staff* among the things prohibited. As this, however, is neither a technical description nor a business inventory, but a proverbial enumeration, all unbiased readers feel that the very same original expression might be rendered *not even a staff*, or *at most a staff*, the staff being as it were the boundary between what was forbidden and allowed, and it making practically no odds whether it were left or taken.

### 10. And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart from that place.

*And he said to them* (further) on the same subject, or the same occasion, one of Mark's favourite transitions (see above, on 4. 13. 21. 24. 26. 30.) What is here said is explanatory of the charge immediately preceding. They had no need of luggage or provisions because they would be hospitably entertained at every stopping place. *Wherever*, in whatever town or neighbourhood, *ye go into a house* (or dwelling), i. e. as invited guests, *there* (in that same house) *remain until ye go out thence*, i. e. from that vicinity. The apparent incongruity of telling them to stay till they departed, as if they could do otherwise, arises wholly from the reference of the local particles, *wherever*, *where*, and *thence*, to different objects not distinguished in the text, but pointed out in the foregoing paraphrase. The meaning of this charge is that although they would be cheerfully received and entertained wherever they might come in Christ's name, they must give no unnecessary trouble and attract no unnecessary notice, by removals from one dwelling to another in the same place (compare Luke 10, 7.) They were not to be received as visitors but messengers or heralds, and must be content with what was absolutely necessary.

11. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

The foregoing directions presupposed that they would everywhere be well received; but they are now prepared to meet with marked exceptions, not in families or houses merely, but in towns and whole communities (Matt. 10, 14. Luke 9, 5.) This we know was the experience of our Lord himself (see above, on 5, 17, and compare Luke 9, 53), and he instructs the twelve how to act in all such cases. *Whoever* (or *as many as*) *shall not receive you*, not as guests merely but as teachers, *neither hear you*, speaking in my name, by my authority, and of my kingdom. *When ye depart*, or more exactly, *going out thence*, i. e. immediately when thus rejected. *Shake off*, the expression used by Luke (9, 5), whereas that of Mark and Matthew (10, 14) strictly means *to shake out*, though descriptive of the same act. *Dust* is also the expression used by Luke and Matthew, while the one employed by Mark means strictly *earth* thrown up from any excavation, but appears to have acquired in the later Greek the sense of loose earth or flying dust. *Under your feet*, a supplementary specification, not expressed as such in English, which might be rendered more exactly, *the dust* (namely) *that beneath your feet*, meaning that which adheres to the feet in walking. *For a testimony to them* (as in 1, 44) or as Luke more precisely phrases it, *against them* (Luke 9, 5.) The act enjoined is a symbolical one, meaning that they would not even let the dust of the places where these people lived adhere to them, much less consent to come in contact with them.

selves, in other words, that they renounced all intercourse with them forever. The same essential meaning was expressed by the kindred act of shaking the garments. That both were practised by the apostles, even after Christ's ascension, we may learn from Paul's example at Antioch and Corinth (Acts 13, 51. 18, 6.) The ancient Jews are said to have adopted the same method on returning to the Holy Land from foreign countries, to denote that they desired to abjure and leave behind all that cleaved to them of heathenism. In the case before us, it was a reciprocal rejection of those by whom they were themselves rejected. The last clause in the common text and version is not found here in the oldest copies, and is regarded by the latest critics as a mere assimilation of Mark's text to Matthew's (9, 15.) The meaning of the clause is that the guilt of those who thus deliberately rejected Christ when offered to them was incomparably greater than the most atrocious sins of those who had enjoyed no such advantage. The case of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18, 20. 19, 24. 25) is a standing type in Scripture, both of aggravated sin and fearful retribution (Deut. 29, 23. Isai. 13, 19. Jer. 49, 18. 50, 40. Amos 4, 11.) The threatening here implied, if not expressed, has reference to the last appeal which Christ was now about to make, the farewell offer of himself and his salvation, by the aid of the apostles to the whole population of the country, or at least of Galilee, before the days of his assumption should be filled and his face set for the last time towards Jerusalem (Luke 9, 51.)

12. And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

To this account of the commission now received by the apostles Mark adds a statement of its execution. *Going out*, from the Lord's presence or the place where he delivered these instructions, they proceeded to fulfil them, not at random or confusedly, but on a systematic method (see above, on v. 6), going about or through the country and among the villages or from town to town (Luke 9, 6.) *Preached*, announced, proclaimed it as a privilege and duty (see above, on 1, 4. 3, 14), *that they* (who heard the proclamation) *should repent*, the same message which had been already brought by John the Baptist (1, 4) and by Christ himself (1, 15.) The repentance thus preached was not simply sorrow or compunction, as a part of individual experience, but that great moral revolution, which was to precede as well as follow the Messiah's advent, as predicted by the ancient prophets (see above, on 1, 2. 3.)

13. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed (them).

As in the case of Christ himself, the teaching of the twelve was authenticated and attested by miraculous credentials. Mark, as usual, makes prominent the case of dispossession, *and they cast out many de-*

*mons* (see above, on 1, 34. 39. 3, 15. 22) but then expressly mentions other miracles of healing, with a specific method of performing them not mentioned in the other gospels. *And they anointed with oil many sick* (literally, strengthless, weak, infirm) *and cured (them)*, the verb used above in 1, 34, and there explained (compare 3, 2. 10. 15. 6, 5.) This particular method of effecting cures, although not mentioned in our Lord's farewell instructions (see below, on 16, 18), seems to have been practised in the apostolic church long after (compare James 5, 14), not as a medical appliance, but as one of those external signs, by which the object and the performer of the miracle were brought into a visible connection. Thus in few words, but with great distinctness, Mark describes the execution, by the twelve, of their renewed commission, or rather of the charge with which, for the first time, they were actually sent out as apostles, and which Luke (9, 6) sums up in four words, *preaching and healing everywhere*.

14. And king Herod heard (of him), for his name was spread abroad, and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.

Leaving the general effect of this new agency to be inferred or taken for granted, the evangelist describes with some particularity the singular impression which it made upon a public character of high rank and some historical celebrity. This was Herod Antipas, the second son of Herod the Great (Matt. 2, 1. Luke 1, 5), and bearing the abbreviated name of his grandfather, Antipater the Edomite or Idumean (see above, on 3, 8), who had been the minister or confidential counsellor of Hyrcanus II., the last of the Maccabees or Hasmonean Kings, under whom, or rather through whom, Pompey the Great obtained possession of the Holy Land, and virtually although not ostensibly reduced it to a Roman province. Antipater, however, still continued to enjoy the favour of the conquerors, and his son Herod, after fleeing from the country to escape a sentence of the Sanhedrim, returned in triumph, having been acknowledged by the Senate and crowned in the Capitol as king of the Jews. After reigning many years as a vassal of the empire, he bequeathed his kingdom to his three sons Archelaus, Antipas, and Philip, the first of whom was soon displaced by Roman governors, while both the others reigned much longer, as tributary sovereigns, but without the royal title, for which Augustus substituted that of *tetrarch*, which originally signified the ruler of a fourth part, or one of four associated rulers, as in ancient Galatia, but was afterwards applied in a generic sense to any ruler and especially to tributary kings, immediately dependent on the Roman emperor. Hence Antipas, though usually called the *tetrarch* (Matt. 14, 1. Luke 3, 1. 19. 9, 7. Acts 13, 1), is by Mark repeatedly described as *king*, which, though it seems at first sight an inaccuracy, really evinces his exact acquaintance with the titular rank of Herod, both in common parlance and in the actual arrangements of the empire. This prince, whose dominions comprised

Galilee, Samaria, and Perea, resided usually at Tiberias, a place from which the sea of Galilee derived one of its names (see above, on 1, 16), but which is not itself named in the New Testament, perhaps because our Saviour did not visit it, in order to avoid precipitating the catastrophe or crisis of his history, by being brought into collision with the court or person of this wicked ruler. But although they had not met, Herod, as might have been expected, *heard* (of him), *for his name had become manifest* (or *famous*), first by means of his own words and deeds incessantly reported far and wide by those who witnessed them, although this process was in some degree retarded by occasional injunctions not to make him known, and then by the preaching and the miracles of the twelve apostles who were sent forth for the very purpose. That the history has reference to this last mode of diffusion, is not only natural and likely in itself but rendered more so by the readiness with which it accounts for the insertion of the following story just at this point, after the commissioning and going forth of the apostles. The effect produced by this increasing fame of Jesus on the mind of Herod, although strange, is not incredible, but true to nature and experience. His conclusion was that this was John the Baptist (literally, *the one baptizing*), who was indeed dead, but as the conscience-stricken king imagined, had been *raised* (aroused, awakened, see above, on 1, 31. 5, 41) *from the dead* (from among them, their condition and society), not from death as an abstraction or a mere condition without reference to persons. The doctrine of a resurrection, although veiled or only partially disclosed in the Old Testament, was now an article of faith with all the Jews except the Sadducees, who seem to have rejected it on philosophical rather than scriptural grounds. Even Herod, who seems elsewhere to be called a Sadducee (see below, on 8, 15), was either less incredulous on this point, or was scared out of his unbelief by guilty fear. This idea was the more strange because John performed no miracle (John 10, 41), and therefore miracles could be no proof of his resuscitation. But even as to this point the evangelist suggests without developing an explanation. *Therefore*, literally, *for* (or *on account of*) *this*, i. e. because he has appeared again, with some new message or authority, perhaps to punish those who would not hear him or who slew him when he came before. Such an imagination was not wholly destitute of colour, since the prophecy of Malachi respecting John suggests the idea of successive advents, which might well be misconceived by Herod as relating to distinct appearances of one and the same person. (See above, on 1, 2, 3.) The expressions of the last clause are particularly strong in the original. *For this* (cause) *energize the powers in him*, i. e. miraculous or superhuman powers, not only *show forth themselves* (which conveys too little and is neither the exact idea nor the form of the original) but *are busy, active, energetic*, which last is a word of kindred origin with that here used. The English version gives to *powers* the secondary meaning which it sometimes has of miracles, or mighty works, as the effects and proofs of superhuman power (see above, on v. 5, and below, on 9, 39); but the primary meaning is entitled to the preference as such and on account of its conjunc-

tion with a verb requiring it, as may be seen from the change which the translators have been forced to make in it, in order to retain their customary version of the noun, since a miracle cannot be said to act or to be active, which can be asserted only of the power that produces it. All that need be added as to this point is that, out of twenty places where the same Greek verb occurs in the New Testament, this is the only one in which it is not strictly rendered as expressive of efficient action. Thus explained the phrase before us is still more significant of Herod's guilty fears, occasioned by the very rumour of our Saviour's miracles, the source or ground of which fears is explained in the ensuing context.

15. Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.

But before proceeding to this explanation, Mark informs us that these speculations as to our Lord's identity were not confined to Herod, but were made the subject of solicitous discussion at his court and elsewhere. *Others said*, not on any one occasion, but as the imperfect tense denotes, were saying or were wont to say. It seems to refer therefore not to discourses held in Herod's presence or addressed directly to him, but to the common talk or popular discussions of the day. While Herod entertained this strange idea, it was very generally thought and said by others, *that* (see above, on 1, 15. 37. 40) *it is Elias*, the Greek form of *Elijah*, who was really foretold as the forerunner of Messiah (Mal. 4. 5), and who in a certain sense did reappear in John the Baptist. (See above, on 1, 2. 3, and below, on 9, 11-13.) This was therefore a correct interpretation, but too definite for some, who were contented to believe that Jesus was *a prophet*, not in any modern or attenuated sense, but *as one of the prophets* properly so called and perfectly familiar as a well-defined class of persons in the sacred history. This qualification was the more important, as the gift of prophecy had been suspended for four centuries, and therefore to assert that a prophet of the old school had arisen was to say that a new dispensation had begun or was approaching. We have thus condensed in this verse, not mere incoherent gossip, but the principal opinions entertained among the Jews as to the person of the Saviour.

16. But when Herod heard (thereof), he said, It is John, whom I beheaded : he is risen from the dead.

*But Herod hearing*, either these expressions of opinion, or the rumours which occasioned them, more probably the latter, as the verse preceding relates not to what passed in his presence, but to what was passing all through his dominions. The meaning then is, not that in reply to these suggestions Herod said what is recorded in this verse, but that among the various opinions then afloat in the community, whether known to him or not, this was his. While others were proposing this or that solution of the wonderful phenomena in question, Herod had a theory or explanation of his own distinct from all the rest, and sug-

gested by his own guilty memory and conscience. This view of the matter not only agrees better with the terms of the narrative expounded strictly, but enables us to understand the king as saying these things to himself or to his confidential servants (Matt. 14, 2), which is certainly more natural than to suppose a public agitation of the question in the court or palace, and a public avowal of his fear that this would prove to be the very man whom he had put to death. There is peculiar force in the original arrangement of the sentence, only partially retained in the translation. (*He*) whom I beheaded—John—this is—he (even he) has arisen (or been raised) from (among) the dead.

17. For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her.

One of the characteristics of a well-ordered history, as distinguished from mere chronicles or annals, is the way in which the writer interweaves his materials instead of simply throwing them together, going back to take up what has been allowed to drop, and introducing topics, even out of their precise chronological arrangement, when required to complete or to illustrate the main narrative. The best historians in every language are remarkable for this constructive skill, which is rather natural than artificial, and is therefore often greatest where it shows the least. Some of the best samples of this quality are furnished by the sacred writers, whose simplicity is not, as some imagine, the effect of ignorance and inexperience, but of perfect skill; their artlessness is not opposed to art but to artifice, and often where the condescending critic pities the deficiency of purpose and coherent plan, it is the perfectness of both which has deceived him. Many instances of this kind are afforded by the gospels, one of which is now before us, in the different but equally artistic mode in which the writers introduce the narrative of John's imprisonment. Matthew and Mark defer it till they come to speak of Herod's terror when he heard of Jesus, where they are naturally led to give the causes of that strange impression by relating the whole story in connection. Luke relates the perplexity of Herod in the same way, but had no occasion to recount his previous treatment of the Baptist, having recorded it already in his narrative of John's appearance and official ministry. Now as both these methods are entirely natural and in accordance with the theory and practice of the best historians, and while the difference may serve to show the independence of the writers who exhibit it, the charge of incoherence against either is as groundless as against the best digested portions of Polybius or Gibbon. The *for* at the beginning of this verse refers to the phrase *whom I beheaded* in the one preceding. To one unacquainted with the previous facts this expression would need explanation, and Mark now proceeds to give it. *Sending out (or away)*, the verb from which *apostle* is derived (see above, on 1, 2, 3, 14, 6, 7), but here applied to the commission of a soldier or an officer of justice (see below, on v. 27.) *Seized, arrested*, the verb explained above (on 1, 31, 3, 21, 5, 41) as

denoting either violent or friendly seizure. *Bound*, either in the strict sense of *fastened*, chained, or in the wide one of *confined*, imprisoned, which the Greek sometimes seems to have. *In prison*, literally guard or ward, which may either mean the place or the condition of confinement. *For* (on account of) *Herodias*, the daughter of Aristobulus, son of Herod the Great, was married by her grandfather to his son Philip, not the tetrarch mentioned in Luke 3, 1, but another who appears to have occupied no public station. Leaving him she married, in direct violation of the law, her uncle and brother-in-law Herod Antipas, who had divorced his own wife the daughter of Aretas an Arabian king, supposed to be the same of whom Paul speaks in one of his epistles (2 Cor. 11, 32.) This divorce involved him in a war from which he could be extricated only by the Roman arms. Enough has now been said to show the character not only of Herodias and of Antipas but also of the whole Herodian race, whose history is stained with many odious imputations of adultery and even incest under the pretence of marriage.

18. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

It is not without reason that Mark speaks of John as being thrown into prison because Herod married Herodias; *for John said to Herod, it is not lawful* (or permitted) either by the law of nature or the law of Moses, *to have* (or hold in thy possession) *the wife of thy* (own) *brother*. There is something very pleasing in this incidental glimpse of John's consistency and faithfulness in reproving sin without respect of persons, to which Christ himself seems to refer when he describes John as neither a reed shaken by the wind nor a courtier in soft raiment (Matt. 11, 7. 8. Luke 7, 24. 25.) This description is emphatically verified by John's appearance in the scene before us, where the austere preacher of the wilderness, who so severely scourged both Pharisees and Sadducees, though enemies and rivals, as alike belonging to the seed of the serpent (Gen. 3, 15) or generation of vipers (Matt. 3, 7), appears reproving Herod on his throne for his incestuous connection with his brother's wife and all his other sins, of which this was the most flagrant and notorious, until he crowned all by his treatment of John himself (Luke 3, 19. 20.)

19. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not.

This boldness and fidelity of course provoked the enmity of her who had occasioned it. *Had a quarrel* implies open strife, whereas the true sense is that given in the margin of our Bible, *had an inward grudge*. The original expression is as idiomatic as the English and not easily translated. The Greek verb strictly means *had in*, i. e. had within her; the object is to be supplied from the context or from usage. Now Herodotus twice uses the same verb with a noun originally meaning *bile*, then wrath or bitter anger, and the modern philo-

logical interpreters agree with the old Greek lexicographers in making Mark's phrase an elliptical contraction of the one just given, *Herodias had in* (her, i. e. cherished, harboured, secret anger, spite) *against him*. *Would have* is not a mere auxiliary verb or compound tense, but a distinct proposition, *wished to kill him* (see above, on 1, 40.) The same is true of the next clause, *and she was not able*, for the reason given in the next verse.

20. For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and a holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

We have here disclosed to us the interesting fact, that John the Baptist made a powerful impression upon Herod when brought into contact with him. This statement must at least include the time of John's imprisonment, for if it had reference exclusively to an earlier time, a different tense would have been used. Most probably the meaning is, that the impression previously made on Herod was confirmed by nearer intercourse or closer observation. The first effect described is that of *fear*, not terror or alarm, but awe and reverence produced by his knowledge of John's character. *Just and holy* may be here combined as a strong expression of moral excellence without exact and nice discrimination; or the first may be intended to describe his rectitude towards man, and the second his piety towards God; or the first his moral character in general, and the second his official character, as one peculiarly consecrated to the divine service (see above, on 1, 24.) The sense will then be that Herod recognized John's personal excellence and also his divine legation. *Observed him*, either in the sense of watching his movements, or in that of keeping and obeying his instructions, both which are certain meanings of the uncompounded Greek verb (see below, on 7, 9, and compare Matt. 23, 3, 27, 36), and either would agree well with what follows here. But as the compound form is not so used in the New Testament, but only in the sense of keeping or preserving (Matt. 9, 17. Luke 2, 19. 5, 38), some of the best interpreters prefer the marginal translation, *kept* (or *saved*) *him*, i. e. for a time from the malice of Herodias. Nor was this all, but *having heard him, he did many (things)*, of those which John required or recommended. A less natural construction, but amounting to the same thing, is that *having heard (from) him many (things), he did (them.)* Nor was it merely from a slavish dread or stress of conscience that he acted thus, but from a real approbation and complacency in John's instructions, *and he gladly heard him*, literally, *sweetly*, i. e. with relish, as applied by Xenophon to the enjoyment of pleasant food, and here transferred, almost without a figure, to the analogous effect of intellectual and spiritual aliment. These promising appearances, however, were but temporary. Herod, whose character was weak as well as wicked, soon yielded to the constant influence of Herodias, and at length desired himself to kill John, but was deterred by his immense popularity and credit as a prophet (Matt. 14, 5.) These accounts

are perfectly consistent with each other and with the statement of Josephus, that Herod was afraid of some political excitement as the fruit of John the Baptist's preaching. Such men, in such emergencies, are usually actuated, not by simple but by complex motives, and the choice made by the different historians is just what might have been expected from their several views and purposes in writing. Here again the German notion of a contradiction between Mark and Matthew is entirely at variance with our principles and practice as to evidence in courts of justice.

21. And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birth-day made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief (estates) of Galilee.

*A seasonable* (opportune, convenient) *day being* (*come*, or *come to pass*, as in v. 2 above), not for Herod's feast, which was determined by his birth-day, but for the purpose of Herodias. The sense is not that he waited for a suitable time to celebrate his birth-day, but that she waited for his birth-day as a good time to accomplish her malignant purpose. This is clear not only from the general connection, but from the particular construction, which is not that when a convenient day was come, Herod made a feast, &c., but that a convenient day being come (to wit) when (*ὅτε* not *ὅτι*) Herod made a feast, &c., then happened what is here recorded. *Birth-day* is in Greek a word used by the older writers to denote a day kept in memory of the dead, but in the later classics and the Greek of the New Testament, confounded with a kindred form (*γενέθλια*) which means a birth-day, or rather its festivities, and therefore written in the plural. *Herod made a supper*, or a feast, the Greek word being used to signify the chief meal of the day, which among the more luxurious classes in ancient as in later times, was commonly the last or evening-meal, and therefore corresponded to the modern fashionable dinner. *To* (or *for*, i. e. in honour of) *his lords*, a later Greek derivative of *great*, corresponding to the Latin *magnates* and the Spanish *grandes* (or *grandees*). *High captains*, *chiliarchs*, commanders of a thousand men, used by the later Greek historians to describe the Roman tribunes, of whom six were attached to every complete legion, each commanding ten centuries, at least upon the field of battle. In the New Testament we find it applied, in the singular number, to the commander of the Roman garrison at Jerusalem (Acts 21, 31. 22, 24. 23, 10. 24, 7), and also transferred to the Jewish captain of the temple-guard (John 18, 12), and in the plural to the officers of rank at Cesarea (Acts 25, 23), which may also be the meaning here, as the reference is to officers in Herod's service, although these may have been Romans, as the tetrarch was only a titular or tributary sovereign, being really a vassal of the empire (see above, on v. 14.) *Chief estates*, not, as the words might seem to mean in modern English, largest fortunes, but highest ranks, or rather men of highest rank, the original expression being one word and denoting simply *first*, but often absolutely used to mean *the first* (*men*), chiefs, of a

community. (See below, on 9, 34. 10, 31. 44, and compare Luke 19, 47. Acts 13, 50. 17, 4. 25, 2. 28, 7. 17.) It may here have a generic sense including both the terms preceding and descriptive of the civil and military chiefs respectively; or the residuary sense of other leading men, not so included. The essential meaning of the whole is that this festival convened all the most distinguished men of Galilee, the most important part of Herod's tetrarchy. (See above, on 1, 9. 14. 28. 39. 3, 7.)

22. 23. And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give (it) thee. And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give (it) thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

*And the daughter of Herodias herself* (or of this same Herodias), whose name, according to Josephus, was *Salome, coming in* (to the company before described) *and having danced*, not with others but alone, the dancing here intended not so much resembling the favourite amusement of the social circle as the professional exhibition of the theatre, and therefore never practised in the east or among the Greeks and Romans by women of respectable condition, so that this display was really a sacrifice of dignity and decency, intended to prevail upon the king by the seductions of an art, which he probably admired and in which Salome may have had extraordinary grace and skill. *And having pleased Herod and those reclining with him* (at the table, see above, on 2, 15.) All this is in the form of a preamble or preliminary statement of the circumstances in which the event about to be recorded took place. The extravagance of Herod's admiration was evinced by his inconsiderate and lavish offer *to the girl* (or damsel), the word used above in 5, 42, and there explained. *Ask me (for thyself, as the middle voice in Greek denotes) whatsoever thou wilt* (or choosest, wishest, as in v. 19) *and I will give (it) to thee.* Not content with this rash promise, he confirmed it by an oath, at the same time rendering it more specific and profuse while he seemed to be restricting it. For although in its first form it was unrestricted, yet as she would not have dreamed of asking half his kingdom unless he suggested it, the limitation is in fact a more absurd exaggeration.

24. And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

*And (or but) she going out* (from the banquet-hall to the apartments of the women which were separate from those of the men) *said to her mother, What shall I ask?* This seems to imply that there had been no previous understanding or agreement between them, but that

the mother had employed the daughter's dancing to excite the liberality of Herod, whose infirmities she well knew, with the purpose of afterwards giving it the direction which she most desired and he least expected. The prompt laconic answer shows not only a predetermined plan, but a vindictive temper and an iron will. Her sanguinary purpose was expressed still more distinctly by requesting not the death of John the Baptist as a favour, but his head as a material gift.

25. And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.

*And coming in immediately, with haste,* not only making no resistance and displaying no repugnance to her mother's horrid proposition, but assenting to it with alacrity as something pleasing to herself, a sufficient indication that the daughter, like the mother, was a genuine Herod in her tastes and disposition. There is also something singularly peremptory in her answer to the king, as if she were afraid that on reflection he would break his word. *I will* (i. e. I wish, I choose) *that thou give me forthwith* (on the spot, without delay), an old English meaning of the phrase *by and by*, which now invariably suggests an interval, though not a long one. *In a charger*, an old English word for a large dish, so called according to the etymologists from the load that it sustained. The Greek word originally means a board; then, among other special applications of the term, a wooden trencher; and then any dish, without regard to the material. As Mark does not record this as a part of the suggestion of Herodias, it was probably added by the daughter of her own accord, as a hideous jest implying an intention to devour it.

26. And the king was exceeding sorry; (yet) for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.

*Becoming* (by a sudden change of feeling not expressed in the translation) *exceeding sorry*, very sad, in Greek a single but compounded word originally meaning *grieved all round*, i. e. surrounded by, involved in grief. This abrupt return of Herod to his senses is almost as clear a sign of intellectual and moral weakness as his foolish promise and his wicked oath. It also shows the motive of the eager promptitude with which his offer was embraced and acted on. This single scene affords a glimpse into the private life and character of this abandoned couple fearfully in keeping with the history of their family as given by Josephus, though a flattering and interested writer. But Herod's sorrow, although probably sincere, was not sufficient to undo the mischief which his levity had done. For this two reasons seem to be assigned, his conscience and his honour, a mistaken sense of duty and a feeling of false shame in reference to those around him. *For* (because of, on account

of) *the oaths*, which may be taken either as a generic plural, equivalent in meaning to the singular, or as an inexact description of the promise and the oath (distinctly mentioned in v. 23) by a name strictly applicable only to the latter; or as referring to an eager repetition of his oath, not unlikely to have happened although not recorded. *And those reclining with him* (at his table, as his guests), before whom he had made the promise, and who may have affected to applaud its generosity and gallantry, and therefore might be probably expected to despise his fickleness and meanness if he broke it. The simplest construction is to take these as two distinct motives, a sincere belief that he was bound to keep his oath, and a morbid cowardly regard to the opinion of his company. It may be, however, that the two are to be more completely blended, and the one allowed to qualify the other, when the sense will be, that he considered his oath binding because publicly uttered, and that if it had been sworn in private he would not have scrupled to retract or break it. In either case the oath was an unlawful one on two accounts, because it was gratuitous and therefore taking the Lord's name in vain (Ex. 20, 7. Matt. 5, 3f), and because it was dangerous granting in advance what he might have no right to give, as the event proved to his sorrow and his cost. Although he could not therefore have broken his promise without guilt, he could not keep it without greater guilt, a choice of evils in which no man has a right to implicate himself by rash engagements. Deterred by this twofold or complex motive, *he would not* (i. e. did not choose, was not willing to) *reject her*, an emphatic and significant Greek verb, originally meaning to displace, put away, or set aside, and then to reject with scorn, as applied to things and persons (see below, on 7, 9), both which are here included, as he could not nullify his promise without treating her who now claimed its performance with contempt.

27. And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison;

*And immediately*, as if to give himself no time for further thought, *the king sending out* (or off, the same verb that is used above in reference to John's arrest, v. 17.) *An executioner*, or, as the margin reads, *one of his guard*. As in 5, 23, some suppose that Mark employs a Latin construction, so here all agree that he employs a Latin word (*speculator*) but with a Greek inflection. As it is not used, however, by the Roman historians in any military sense but that of scout or spy, some of the older writers supposed it to be incorrectly written for *spiculator*, i. e. one armed with a *spicula* or dart; but the latest interpreters explain it in its etymological sense of one who looks, beholds or watches, hence a guard, a body-guard, or life-guard, here employed as an executioner, which duty is connected with the name by Seneca. Thus both the textual and marginal translations in our Bible are sanctioned by the highest philological authorities. *Commanded*, not the verb so rendered in v. 8, or that in 5, 43, but one peculiarly appropriate

in this place as originally meaning to array or draw up and then to order or command, both in a military sense or application. *And he* (the speculator, guard, or executioner) going away (from the palace or the royal presence) *beheaded him* (the verb used by Herod in v. 16) *in the prison*, which, according to Josephus, was the fortress of Machærus on the southern frontier of Peraea near the Dead Sea. We must, therefore, either assume an interval of several days between the order and the execution, or suppose this feast to have been held at the fortress during a visit of the tetrarch to that part of his dominions. The objection to the latter supposition, which is otherwise the most satisfactory, is that the company described in v. 21 are the lords, high captains, and chief estates, not of Herod's kingdom, but of *Galilee*, its north-western province, who would hardly be assembled on the southern frontier of Peraea, even if Herod would be likely to select a military station near the desert for the celebration of his birth-day.

28. And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel ; and the damsel gave it to her mother.

This verse records the punctual performance of Herod's promise and the exact execution of his orders, not excepting the dish, which with its ghastly contents was presented to the dancing-girl, whose fee it was, and by her to her mother, who, although behind the scenes, was the principal actor, or at least the manager of this whole tragedy. It may here be added that she afterwards involved her husband in a ruinous attempt at further elevation, which was thwarted by her brother Herod Agrippa (the one whose death is recorded in the twelfth chapter of Acts), and resulted in the exile both of Herod and Herodias, first to Gaul, and then Spain, where the former and most probably the latter died. Salome, true to her Herodian instincts, was married twice to near relations ; first to her father's brother (and namesake) Philip the Tetrarch (see above, on v. 17, and compare Luke 3, 1), and after his death to Aristobulus, son of Herod king of Chalcis, to whom she bore three children. These facts are stated by Josephus, the contemporary Jewish historian ; the story of her death, preserved by the Byzantine writer Nicephorus, is commonly regarded as a later fiction.

29. And when his disciples heard (of it), they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

*His disciples*, which in Matthew (14, 12) might possibly mean those of Jesus, can have no such meaning here where Jesus is not mentioned till the next verse and in obvious connection with another subject. It must therefore signify John's own disciples, either those who had once been so before his imprisonment, or those who still professed to be so under some mistaken notion as to the relation which he bore to the Messiah, or some sceptical misgiving as to Jesus (see above, on 2, 18.) It is possible however that it here has a wider sense than either of those just proposed, and means some of the many who with-

out having ever been his personal attendants or disciples in the strict sense had received his doctrines and his baptism. (For a similar application of the term to many followers of Jesus, see above, on 2, 18.) Of such disciples the whole land was full, and even on the outskirts of Perea there could not be wanting some to pay this last respect to his decapitated body and to announce his death to Jesus (Matt. 14, 12), who may now have been recognized by many for the first time as the Baptist's legitimate successor. *Corpse*, originally any thing that falls, and when connected with the word *dead*, a human body, especially as lying slain or exposed; then absolutely used by later writers in the same sense. *Tomb*, monument, memorial (see above, on 5, 3. 5.)

30. And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

As the news of John's imprisonment led Jesus to withdraw from Judea into Galilee and there commence his ministry afresh (see above, on 1, 14), so the news of his death is followed by a similar retreat from Galilee itself into the desert, not for safety but for rest, and that not for himself but for his followers. While Matthew (14, 13) connects this movement with the death of John the Baptist, but without asserting more than a simple chronological succession, Mark interposes the return of the apostles from their mission and a gracious invitation from their master to repose after their labours (compare Luke 9, 10.) *Gathered themselves together*, are assembled or collected, in the present tense, but as the form may be either passive or middle, the reflexive version is perhaps the best. This gathering has relation to the various fields or routes on which they had been sent forth (see above, on v. 7.) As they seem to have returned together, there was probably a time fixed when they went forth for their coming back. *Told*, reported, brought back word (as in Matt. 2, 8. 11, 4), a specific sense which is peculiarly appropriate here because the duty of returning and reporting was involved in their commission. The subject of their report was not merely what things they had done (Luke 9, 10), but what things they had taught. The former phrase may be generic and include their whole proceedings, among which their teaching is then separately specified (both what they did in general and what they taught in particular); or the two may designate the two great functions of their ministry like those of the Redeemer's own, namely miracles and teaching (as well what they did as what they taught; compare Acts, 1, 1.) In either case, the main fact stated is that they made a full report of this their first apostolic mission.

31. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

It appears from this verse, which is found in Mark alone, that the Apostles when they came back found their master, not enjoying rest while they discharged his office, but surrounded as before by a fluctuating and oppressive multitude. *The coming and the going were many*, an expressive phrase, correcting the impression which the history might otherwise have made, that the body of Christ's hearers was a fixed one, moving *en masse* from place to place. There were some, we know, who did thus follow him, not only the apostles but a body of disciples in the wider sense. Besides these, however, and no doubt far more numerous than both, was the ever-shifting multitude of strangers from each neighbourhood to which he came, here distinguished from his constant attendants as *the comers and the goers*. So great was the confusion thus occasioned that the twelve had not leisure, or rather had not opportunity or good time (a Greek verb corresponding to the adjective in v. 21), *even to eat*, i. e. to take their regular repasts. In gracious condescension to their wants, as far as possible removed from all ascetic rigour, he invites them to a desert (i. e. a secluded unfrequented place) to rest themselves *a little* (while), or in a small degree, to which the Greek word may be equally applied. *Come* (or *hither*, see above, on 1, 1), *ye yourselves*, a phrase distinguishing the twelve from all his other followers, as those by whom he wished to be accompanied.

32. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

*And they went away* (accordingly) *into a desert place by ship*, or rather (*in*) *the ship*, i. e. the one provided by our Lord's direction for his own exclusive use (see above, on 3, 9.) *Privately*, in private, or apart, relating not so much to the mode of their departure as to its design and purpose. We know from other sources that the place to which they went was an unfrequented spot belonging to a town called Bethsaida (Luke 9, 10) on the other (or eastern) side of the sea of Galilee or Tiberias (John 6, 1.) We are now approaching an occurrence so remarkable that all the four evangelists have given a detailed account of it. This not only furnishes a richer source of illustration than in any former case, but creates a strong presumption that the matter thus contained in all the gospels is for some reason worthy of particular attention.

33. And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

We have here a striking proof that our Saviour's popularity had not begun to wane when this occurrence took place; for not only did the multitudes still throng him when at home (v. 31), but no sooner had he pushed off in his boat to seek a momentary respite elsewhere,

than the masses put themselves in motion to pursue or rather to outstrip him, so that when he reached his place of destination they were ready to receive him and soon surrounded him as if he had not left them. There is rather an unusual variation in the text of this verse as preserved in different manuscripts. *The multitudes* in the first clause, *him* in the second, and *came together to him* in the last, are all omitted by the oldest manuscripts and latest critics. These omissions however leave the sense essentially unchanged. *They* (according to the common text, *the crowds or masses*) *saw them* (Jesus and the twelve) *departing*, stealing away, the verb according to its etymology suggesting the idea of a covert or concealed departure, which in this case was necessary to effect their purpose. It should be observed, however, that the Greek verb has a wider sense in general usage, and occurs in v. 31 above in simple opposition or antithesis to *coming*. *And many knew (him)*, recognized his person, as he went into the boat, a very natural expression, as great numbers even of those who saw the embarkation, would of course be less familiar with our Lord's appearance, or would see him less distinctly in the general confusion. *Afoot*, an English adverb corresponding exactly to the Greek in form and derivation, but supplanted in the modern dialect by *on foot*, while its correlative, *ahead*, is even more in vogue than ever, though with some modification of its meaning. For a similar change, but in the opposite direction, compare *asleep* (Acts 7, 60) and *on sleep* (Acts 13, 36.) As they went on foot, it is of course implied that they went *by land*, and some regard this as the meaning of the Greek word ( $\piέ\xi\gamma$ ) which is sometimes used in opposition to a voyage by water in Herodotus and Homer. But even in these cases the idea of a land-march or journey is rather necessarily implied than formally expressed. *From all the towns or cities in that region, not excluding the adjacent rural districts, which are generally represented as dependent on the nearest cities, as for instance in the case of Bethsaida and its desert (see above, on v. 32, and compare Luke 9, 10.)* *Ran thither*, literally, *ran together there*, i. e. converged upon the point towards which they saw that he was steering, and which seems to have been not far from the northern end of the lake, so that the distance which the multitude passed over may not have been very great. *Outwent (or went before) them*, i. e. came first to the place selected. *And came together to him*, whether a part of the true text or not, is no doubt a correct statement of the fact, to wit, that on arriving at their chosen place of rest, the twelve found precisely the same state of things from which they were escaping. In the picture of this singular and interesting incident, Mark, far from acting the abridger, is by far the most minute and graphic.

34. And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd ; and he began to teach them many things.

As these were not strangers or new-comers, but the same crowds who had pressed to see and hear him on the west side of the lake, their eager importunity excited our Lord's pity. *Going out* (from his boat, or from the place of his retirement, which however he had scarcely reached, as they outwent him) he saw *much people* (literally, crowd or concourse), *and was moved with compassion toward* (or *over*) *them*, the same peculiar idiom that was used above in 1, 41, and there explained. What excited his divine and human sympathy was not of course their numbers or their physical condition but their spiritual destitution. The figures of a shepherd and a flock to denote the mutual relation of religious guides and those who follow them are frequent in the Scriptures and too natural to need elucidation. On the other hand, the converse of this figure, or a flock without a shepherd, is the most affecting that can be employed to represent the want of nurture, guidance and protection, the extreme of weakness, helplessness, and imminent exposure both to force and fraud, dispersion and destruction. At the view of this representative multitude, drawn from so many quarters and perhaps swelled by the yearly stream of pilgrims to the Passover (John 6, 4), our Lord began without delay to teach them, thereby showing what he reckoned their most urgent want, and also that although it was his miracles of healing that had prompted them to follow him (John 6, 2), they were not without some just view of the intimate relation of his wonders to his doctrines, or at least not unwilling to receive instruction from the same lips which commanded with authority the most malignant demons and diseases.

35. And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time (is) far passed.

When his discourse was ended, or perhaps while it was yet in progress, his disciples, i. e. the apostles (Luke 9, 12) began to be uneasy at the presence of so vast a multitude in a place which had been chosen for the very reason that it was secluded and remote from thoroughfares, though not cut off from all communication with the surrounding cultivated country. *Already much time* (literally, *hour* or *daytime*) *having been* (or *past*), the verb employed twice above (vs. 2. 21) in reference to the lapse of time and there explained. *His disciples, coming to him*, probably while he was still engaged in teaching, with a view to interrupt him. *Saying that* (*ὅτι* as in vs. 4. 14. 15. 16. 18. 23.) *desert is the place* (where we are now assembled) *and now* (already, or by this time, as in the first clause of this verse) *the time is far passed*, a paraphrase rather than a version of a highly idiomatic Greek phrase not admitting of exact translation. *Day* in the first clause, and *time* in this, are one and the same word in the original, identical with the Latin *hora* and the English *hour*, but used in Greek with greater latitude of meaning, ranging from hours or even moments to the seasons of the year and time in general. Here it may either have the Latin sense or that of day-

time. *Already the time (or daytime) is much*, i. e. the part of it already gone.

36. Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread ; for they have nothing to eat.

This anxious statement as to the lateness of the hour is followed by a proposition. *Send them away*, dismiss, dissolve them as an audience or congregation (as the same verb means in Acts 19, 41. 28, 25.) This confirms the previous supposition that our Lord was still discoursing when the twelve made this suggestion, which was therefore tantamount to saying that he was detaining them too long, that it was time to pause and give them daylight to disperse in. The hint was no doubt well-meant, and regarded by the men who made it as pre-eminently wise and prudent, little suspecting that their master, far from being at a loss as they were, had pursued this very course in order to convince them and others how little he depended on the ordinary means of subsistence. The disciples add a still more specific proposition, that the people be dispersed among the nearest farms and villages to buy provisions for themselves. *That going away into the fields*, i. e. country as opposed to town (see above, on 5, 14), or detached farm-houses as opposed to *villages*. *Round about*, literally, (*in*) a *circle*, (see above, on v. 6 and 3, 34), not necessarily a small one, but as large as might be requisite in order to supply so great a number. *Buy*, in Greek a word peculiarly appropriate because it originally means to *market*, and has primary reference to the purchase of provisions. *For what they may eat they have not*, a fact which they had ascertained by asking or more probably inferred from the appearance of the people, who could scarcely be a caravan of pilgrims, but were probably just come from their own houses.

37. He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat ?

*But he answering said to them* (the twelve), *Give to them* (the multitude) *yourselves* (instead of sending them away to purchase something) *to eat*. We learn from John (6, 6), that Philip was the spokesman upon this occasion, and that our Saviour in this conversation tried the faith of his disciples, i. e. their confidence in his power to provide for all emergencies. *Going away shall we buy*, in Greek an aorist subjunctive, not exactly corresponding either to *shall*, *can*, or *must* in English, though any of these forms might be employed to represent it. *Two hundred pennyworth of bread*, literally, *loaves of (or for) two hundred denarii*, a Roman silver coin current in the provinces and varying in value from fifteen to seventeen cents of our money (see below, on 12, 15. 14, 5.) The precise sum mentioned is of no importance, as it is

not an estimate of what would be required, but merely a round number meaning a large sum or one entirely beyond their means.

38. He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.

*But* (instead of answering this objection or explaining his design) he sends them to inquire into their own resources, that the scantiness of these might enhance the subsequent supply, and cut off all suspicion of its being any thing less than a miracle. *And knowing*, having learned or ascertained by inquiry or inspection.

39. And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass.

*Commanded*, the word used above in v. 27, and peculiarly appropriate to the distribution and arrangement of large numbers. *Sit down*, literally, *lie down*, or *recline*, the customary posture even at table (see above, on 2, 15), but especially convenient in the open air, and when the food was spread upon the ground. *By companies* or *messes*, the original noun meaning compotation or the act of drinking together, then a convivial party, then a mess or company at table. The original construction is peculiar and idiomatic, the idea of distribution being indicated not as in the version by a preposition, but by simple repetition of the noun (*symposia symposia*) *messes messes*, i. e. mess by mess. (For another instance of this idiom see above, on v. 7.) *On the green grass*, a circumstance which not only adds to the beauty of the picture and betrays a vivid recollection of the scene described, perhaps that of Peter (compare John 6, 10), but explains the word *desert* previously used (vs. 31, 32, 35) as denoting not a barren waste, but only an unfrequented solitude, most probably an untilled pasture-ground, to which the corresponding Hebrew word is frequently applied in the Old Testament (e. g. Ps. 65, 13. Joel 2, 22.)

40. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties.

*Sat down*, literally, *fell down*, threw themselves upon the grass with a lively simultaneous movement, which might be described as the whole multitude falling to the earth at once. *In ranks*, a similar distributive construction to the one in the preceding verse, but with a different noun properly denoting beds or plats in a garden, and then any regular form such as squares and parallelograms. It is here applied to larger and smaller messes or parties of fifty and a hundred persons. The construction here is like our own, the preposition (*avá*) signifying distribution. This regular and formal distribution of the people was intended in the first place to prevent confusion in supplying them, but also to facilitate inspection and authenticate the miracle.

41. And when he had taken the five loaves, and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave (them) to his disciples to set before them ; and the two fishes divided he among them all.

*And taking (or having taken) the five loaves (or breads) and the two fishes, looking up (or having looked up) into the sky (or heaven) he blessed (the bread, or asked a blessing on it) and broke up (or into smaller parts) the loaves and gave them to his disciples, that they might set (or place them) before (or by them) (i. e. the multitude) and the two fishes he distributed to all.* He took the five loaves in succession, blessing each or all together. *Bread* and *loaf* are expressed by the same word in Greek as they are in French (*pain, pains.*) *Looking up* is a natural and scriptural gesture in addressing God, whom all men as it were instinctively regard as dwelling in some special sense above them. *Heaven* denotes that distant place of God's abode, but also the visible expanse which seems to separate us from it (see above, on 1, 10.) *Blessed*, a verb originally meaning to speak well of, but in usage applied to God's conferring favours upon men (Matt. 25, 34), to men's invoking such favours upon others (Luke 2, 34), and to men's praising God particularly for such favours (Luke 2, 28). In the case before us these three senses may be said to meet ; for as a man our Saviour gave thanks and implored a blessing, while as God he granted it. The intervention of the twelve in this distribution, while it answered the important but inferior purpose of securing order and decorum, also enabled them to testify more positively both to the scantiness of the provision and to the sufficiency of the supply. *Set before them*, lay beside them, or place near them, so as to be within the reach of all partakers. *Divided among*, not merely *separated* into parts, but *distributed* to all those present, both which acts, distinctly stated in relation to the bread, are here expressed by one and the same verb (*ἐμέρισε*). The particularity of this description corresponds to the deliberate and formal nature of the acts themselves, intended to arouse attention and preclude all surmise of deception or collusion. Nothing indeed could less resemble the confusion and obscurity of all pretended miracles, than the regular and almost ceremonious style in which this vast crowd was first seated and then fed, without the least disorder or concealment as to any part of the proceedings.

42. And they did all eat and were filled.

The unequal division of the verses here is arbitrary and capricious, and should serve to remind us that this whole arrangement is the work of a learned printer in the sixteenth century, and not entitled to the least weight in deciding the construction of a sentence or connection of a passage. *Did all eat* is in modern English an emphatic form, the auxiliary strengthening the verb, as if the fact had been denied or doubted ; but it here represents the simple past tense, *all ate*, or retaining the Greek collocation, *ate all*, implying that the miraculous supply

of food was limited only by the number of consumers. Nor was it a mere nominal supply in each case, but a full satisfaction of the appetite, even in the case of the most hungry. *Filled*, satisfied or sated, a Greek verb anciently confined to the feeding of the lower animals, but in the later writers (such as Arrian and Plutarch) extended to the human subject.

43. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.

We have here a remarkable example of our Saviour's provident discretion, even in the exercise of his almighty power. Had this miracle left no trace of itself except in the memory of men, it might have seemed like a dream or an illusion. But against this Jesus guarded in the most effectual manner by commanding his disciples who had aided in the distribution to collect the fragments which were left over after all were filled (John 6, 12). *And they took up*, and away with them, both which ideas are suggested by the usage of the Greek verb and are equally appropriate, not only here but in v. 8. 29, and in 2, 9-12. 4, 15. 25. *Fragments* (from *frango*, to break, like *κλάσματα* from *κλάω*), broken pieces, scraps, or what are called in common parlance "broken victuals." The design of this command was threefold, first to discourage waste and teach a wise economy even in the lesser things of this life; secondly, to show that in this case as in miracles of healing, the miraculous effect was to be instantly succeeded by the usual condition and the operation of all ordinary laws (see above, on 5, 43), so that although they had just seen a vast concourse supernaturally fed, they were themselves to use the fragments for their subsequent support; and thirdly, to preserve for some time in their sight and their possession the substantial memorials of this wonderful event, which was attested and recalled to mind by every crust and every crumb of which the company partook until the fragments were exhausted. And accordingly we find that our Lord, when afterwards reminding them of this great wonder and another like it, speaks expressly of the quantity left over after all were filled, as one of the most memorable circumstances in the case (see below, on 8, 19. 20). The Vatican manuscript, supposed to be the oldest extant, for *twelve baskets full of fragments* reads *twelve basketfuls of fragments*, a form of expression also used in English, and differing from the other by implying that the basket was used only as a measure. *And from the fishes* is ambiguous, as it may either mean that the twelve baskets contained fragments both of bread and fish, or the contrary, to wit, that the twelve baskets were from the bread alone (compare John 6, 13). The first is much more probable, because there could be no reason for distinguishing between the two kinds of food which had been eaten together; and because if they had been thus distinguished, there would probably have been a similar specification as to the fragments of the fish (but see below, upon the next verse.) These two considerations are too strong to be out-weighed by John's exclusive mention of the loaves in speak

ing of the fragments, which like other arguments from silence or omission is wholly negative and therefore inconclusive. It only remains to be considered whether these fragments were the refuse left by each partaker in the place where he had eaten, or the portions broken by our Lord for distribution and remaining untouched because more than was required to supply all present. The latter is not only a more pleasing supposition, but equally consistent with the terms of the narrative and the other circumstances of the case. That Jesus should have furnished an excessive or superfluous supply is not at variance with his wisdom or omniscience, as he may have done it for the very purposes before suggested. The word translated *basket* is used in a Latin form (*cophinus*) by Juvenal, as the usual baggage of the Jews when travelling. The number twelve has reference to the twelve apostles, so that each filled one, perhaps with some allusion to the symbolical import of the miracle.

44. And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

*They that did eat of* (or more literally, *those eating*) *the loaves were* (*about*, omitted by the latest critics here, but not in the parallel accounts) *five thousand*, without any reference to age or sex. But Luke (9, 14) and John (6, 10) have *five thousand men* (*ἀνδρες*), and Matthew (14, 21) adds expressly, *without women and children*. This may either mean that there were none such present, or merely that they are not comprehended in the total of 5000. The latter is no doubt the true solution and to be explained by a fact already mentioned (see above, on 2, 15), that the men in ancient times as in the east at present ate together, and reclined at their repasts, while the women and children ate apart from them and in the ordinary sitting posture. Hence the companies or messes upon this occasion would be composed of men exclusively, and they alone could be numbered with facility from their distribution into fifties and hundreds (see above, on v. 40.) It is not to be supposed however that the women and children would be overlooked in this benevolent provision, whether many or few, as some suppose upon the ground that the multitude was chiefly composed of pilgrims on their way to the passover (John 6, 4), which only males were required to attend (Ex. 23, 17), (Deut. 16, 16.) But how is this to be reconciled with their having no provisions (see above on v. 36), which seems rather to imply a concourse of people drawn too far from home by the excitement of pursuit (see above, on v. 33), and probably composed of men, women, and children. But whether these were few or many, it seems clear that they were not included in the number stated for the reason above given, whence it follows, either that those least able to dispense with food were not provided, or that the number fed far transcended that recorded, which is *without* (i. e. exclusive of) *women and children*. Five thousand therefore is the minimum of those supplied by this stupendous miracle, being merely the number that could be determined at a glance from the methodical arrangement of

the messes. Even at this rate, the original supply was only that of one loaf (and probably a small one) to a thousand men (besides women and children.) But the greatness of the miracle consists not merely in the vast increase of nutritive material, but in the nature of the process which effected it, and which must be regarded as creative, since it necessarily involves not merely change of form or quality, or new combinations of existing matter, but an absolute addition to the matter itself. The infidel pretence that Christ is here described as visibly multiplying loaves and fishes in his own hands, so that every particle distributed was separately given out by him, is as groundless and absurd as it is impious in spirit and malignant in design. No such process of increase was presented to the eyes of the spectators, who saw nothing but the fact that the loaves and fishes still continued to be served until the whole multitude had been supplied. Equally groundless yet instructive are the efforts of some sceptical interpreters to get rid of this miracle as originally a parable afterwards transformed into a history, or a myth founded on the story of the manna, or of Elijah fed by angels and ravens, or on the doctrine of the living bread as taught by Christ (John 6, 48) and his apostles (1 Cor. 10, 16.) However specious these hypotheses may be, they are at bottom as gratuitous and hollow as the one of olden date, now laughed at even by neologists themselves, that this is not recorded as a miracle at all, but merely as a figurative statement of the fact that by inducing his disciples to distribute their own scanty store, Jesus prevailed on others present who were well provided to communicate with others who had nothing. The only rational alternative is either to refute the overwhelming proof of authenticity and inspiration, or to accept the passage as the literal record of a genuine creative miracle, the first and greatest in the history and therefore perhaps fully detailed in all the gospels.

45. And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.

The effect of this transcendent miracle which, more than any that preceded it, appears to have convinced men of our Lord's Messiahship (John 6, 14), was immediately followed by another more especially intended to confirm this impression on the minds of his disciples. This restriction of the circle of spectators was occasioned by his knowledge of a movement in the multitude to assert his regal claims as the Messiah (John 6, 15.) To escape this dangerous and mistaken view of his pretensions, he withdrew himself at once into the highlands, on the verge of which the multitude had just been fed (John 6, 3.) But first *he constrained* (compelled or forced) *his disciples to enter* (or embark upon) *the ship*, which waited on him for the purpose (see above on 3, 9), and *go before him* (literally *lead forward*, lead the way to) *Bethsaida*, not the city of Gaulonitis, at the north-eastern end of the lake and eastward of the place where the Jordan enters it, in the desert tract south-east of which the miracle had just been wrought (Luke 9,

10), but Bethsaida of Galilee, the birth-place of Simon, Andrew, and Philip (John 1, 45), elsewhere mentioned with Capernaum (Matt. 11, 21. Luke 10, 13), and therefore probably not far from it, but at all events upon the lake-shore, as Eusebius expressly mentions. The name is Aramaic, and denotes a fishery, which accounts for its being borne by more than one place on the lake where fish was so abundant and fishing so common an employment. (See above, on 1, 29.) *He compelled them*, i. e. ordered them against their will, as they would naturally be averse to leave him, both on his account and on their own, a repugnance probably increased by the prospect of a nocturnal voyage on the lake where they had once been rescued from destruction by his presence. (See above, on 4, 35-41.) Some assume, as an additional reason for sending the disciples away, that they were disposed to join in the popular movement for making him a king. However this may be, he stayed behind *until he should dismiss* (dissolve, break up) *the crowd*. (See above, on v. 36.) This was probably a matter of some difficulty, and requiring the exercise not only of authority but also of a superhuman influence.

46. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

*Sent them away* is not the same Greek verb as that employed in the preceding verse, but one originally meaning to *order away* (a kindred compound to the one in v. 39), and in the middle voice to separate one's self by taking leave or bidding farewell, which is its obvious sense in every other place where it occurs (Luke 9, 61. 14, 13. Acts 18, 18. 21. 2 Cor. 2, 13.) It is wholly arbitrary therefore in this one place to depart from so uniform an usage and explain it as synonymous with that before it, the rather as the customary sense is both appropriate and striking. *Having taken leave of them* (or *bidden them farewell*), which was no doubt the benignant form in which he exerted his authority, and even his extraordinary power, to induce them to disperse. *Departed*, went away, *into the mountain* (*not a mountain*, but the highlands or hill-country), which has been already several times mentioned (see above, on 3, 13. 5, 5. 11), and in which he was already (John 6, 3), so that he is only represented as penetrating further into its recesses, not for safety or repose, but *to pray*, another striking incidental notice of our Lord's devotional habits (see above on 1, 35), also given here by Matthew (14, 23), and so far from being inconsistent with the statement made by John (6, 15) of his motive for retiring, that the two things were probably connected in the closest manner, as the plan of making him a king may have been both the occasion and the burden of his prayers at this time.

47. And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

*And evening being come* (or *it being evening*, see above, on 4, 35.)

This relates to the double evening of the Jewish day, one beginning early in the afternoon, the other at sunset or at dusk. (See below, on 14, 17.) The first of these is meant in Matt. 14, 15 (see above on v. 35), the other here (and in Matt. 14, 23.) *In the midst of the sea*, not in its mathematical centre (see above, on 3, 3,) nor exactly half-seas-over, but out at sea, away from shore, i. e. twenty-five or thirty stadia or furlongs (John 6, 19.) *He alone*, i. e. without them or other human company. *Upon the land*, either still upon the mountain (v. 46), or below it on the shore.

48. And he saw them toiling in rowing ; for the wind was contrary unto them : and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

*Toiling* is an inexact and feeble version of a Greek word meaning properly *tormented* (see above, on 5, 7), here applied not merely to the labour or exertion but to the distress and pain by which it was accompanied, both bodily (the violent exercise of rowing) and mental (their anxiety and fear.) *In rowing*, literally, *in driving* or *propelling*, the precise mode of propulsion being indicated by the context, as well here (and in John 6, 19) as in James 3, 4. 2 Peter 2, 7, where it means driven by the wind. The next clause gives the reason of their painful effort, *for the wind was contrary unto them*, i. e. from the west or north-west. *The fourth watch of the night*, according to the Roman division of the night into four watches of three hours each, which from the time of Pompey's conquest had supplanted the old Jewish division into three (Judg. 7, 19. Ps. 90, 6.) The time here meant would be the three hours immediately preceding sunrise or perhaps the break of day, say from 3 to 6 o'clock A. M. *He comes*, another instance of the graphic present (see above), *to* (or *towards*) *them*, where they were detained by the adverse wind, and making painful efforts to advance. *Walking*, originally *walking about*, or *to and fro* (hence *peripatetic*), but in the Greek of the New Testament simply walking, as opposed to other attitudes or motions. *On the sea*, not on the shore, as some absurdly fancy ; for although the phrase sometimes has that meaning in both languages (as when we speak of a house or a town upon the sea), the other is equally justified by usage (see the Septuagint version of Job, 9, 8), is entitled to the preference, where other things are equal, as the primary or strict sense, and is required by the whole connection, by the obvious intention to relate a miracle, and by the fright of the disciples, which could not be owing to the sight of a man walking on the shore, even if he seemed to be walking in the water. *He would have*, literally wished, was willing, but with a more attenuated meaning than in many other cases, nearly equivalent to saying that he was about to pass (or on the point of passing) by them, a modification perfectly analogous to that which may be traced in our auxiliary verbs.

49. But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out.

*And (or but) they seeing him,* not merely *when they saw*, but in the very act of seeing him. *Supposed*, thought, were of opinion, the same verb that is employed in Luke 8, 18 (see above, on 4, 25.) *It had been*, an old English use of the pluperfect to express contingency (common in the version of Acts.) The original construction here is simply, *they supposed a phantom to be* (present), or, *supposed (him) to be a phantom*. This last word is a mere corruption of the Greek word here employed (*phantasma*), both equivalent in meaning to the Latin *apparition*, i. e. an unreal appearance of a real person whether dead or living, commonly the former, but in the present case the latter. *Spirit* is here used in the specific sense, now attached to the synonymous term *ghost*, except when applied to the third person of the Trinity. *Cried out* (or *cried aloud*) for fear (Matt. 14, 26. John 6, 19), the verb used elsewhere to describe the unearthly cries of evil spirits or of those whom they possessed. (See above, on 1, 23, and compare Luke 4, 33. 8, 28.) These particulars are given both as vivid recollections of the memorable scene (perhaps preserved by Peter) and as indications that the twelve, even after their first mission, still remained *in statu pupillari*, with many crude and childish views and even superstitious feelings, which were not to be entirely subdued till afterwards.

50. For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid.

It was not a passing glimpse or dim view of a doubtful object which they had, *for all saw him*, and by necessary implication knew him, which is indeed the meaning constantly attached to some forms of the same Greek verb. But although they recognized his form, they thought it an illusion or a phantasm, as they had left him behind them and were too contracted in their views to expect any manifestation of extraordinary power beyond what they had already witnessed. *They were troubled*, therefore, i. e. violently agitated and disturbed, at this most unexpected and inexplicable sight. But although Jesus suffered them for wise and holy reasons to be thus momentarily alarmed, he did not leave them in this painful situation, but *immediately* (a circumstance here noted both by Mark and Matthew, 14, 27) *talked with them*, no doubt in his usual colloquial tone, with which they were now so familiar, and by which their superstitious fears would be instantly allayed, especially when uttering such cheering, reassuring words as those which follow. *Be of good cheer*, and *be of good comfort*, are the paraphrastic versions given in our Bible, of a single fine Homeric word (*ζάρσει*, pl. *ζαρσέίτε*), which might also be translated *cheer up*, or *take courage*. (See below, on 10, 49, and compare Matt. 9, 2. 22. 14, 27. Luke 8, 48. John 16, 33. Acts 23, 11, and 28, 15, where the corresponding noun appears.) It always presupposes some alarm or apprehension.

sion previously expressed or necessarily implied. *It is I*, literally *I am*, and therefore once translated *I am he* (John 4, 26), which is really the meaning in the other places also, i. e. *I am* (he that I appear to be, or he with whom you are so well acquainted.) The coincidence of this familiar phrase with the divine name I AM (Ex. 3, 14) is extremely striking, even if fortuitous. (See below, on 14, 62.) *Be not afraid*, or frightened, fear not, an exhortation which implies, as something well known to them by experience, that his presence was enough to banish every danger.

51. And he went up unto them into the ship ; and the wind ceased ; and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.

Mark passes over Peter's rash attempt to imitate his master, not from tenderness to Peter, whose denial he records, and many minor errors, no less fully than the other evangelists, but in the exercise of that discretion which arises from the eclectic nature of all history, and belongs to all historians, inspired and uninspired, although the reason for insertion or omission may not lie upon the surface of the narrative, or be discoverable even by the most acute analysis. As every thing was not to be and could not be recorded (John 21, 25), there is no more need of our explaining why one topic is omitted than why another is inserted. It is enough to know that each evangelist was commissioned and inspired to produce a complete history, not in the sense of one containing all the facts connected with the subject, but of one containing all the facts required to produce a definite impression and to answer a specific purpose, whether traceable by us or not. Passing over this remarkable occurrence, therefore, which has been preserved exclusively by Matthew (14, 28-33), Mark relates that Jesus *went up to them into the ship*, and that *the wind ceased*, rested, or reposed, the same remarkable expression that is used in his description of the stilling of the storm (see above, on 4, 39), to which this may be regarded as a kind of sequel. The effect on the disciples is described in terms so strongly idiomatic that they cannot be exactly rendered into English, though the common version gives the sense correctly. *Sore* (the German *sehr*), a Saxon adverb, now entirely superseded by the Latin *very*, and confined by some philologists to evil, a mistake sufficiently corrected by the case before us where "severely," "grievously," are inappropriate as qualifying wonder. The corresponding Greek word is expressive not of quality but quantity, and corresponds to much, very much, extremely and exceedingly, in modern English. *Beyond measure* is a well-chosen substitute but not a version of the other phrase, which means *out of superfluous* or *superabundant*, an expression wholly foreign from our idiom, which can only imitate it by approximation. It here denotes a moral and not merely physical excess, implying that they wondered more than they had any right or reason, as expressly stated in the next verse.

52. For they considered not (the miracle) of the loaves ; for their heart was hardened.

The cause of their excessive and unreasonable wonder was their not arguing from one display of divine power to another, and especially in this case their not reasoning with themselves, that he who stilled the storm before could rescue them from danger now, and that he who had just created food for thousands could at least so far control the elements of nature as to walk upon the water and subdue the wind. *They considered not (the miracle of) the loaves,* another correct paraphrase but not an exact version of the Greek, which means they *did not understand about the loaves*, or as some explain the preposition, *at the loaves*, i. e. at the time and place of that stupendous miracle, or *after the loaves*, i. e. even after its performance. All these constructions give the verb a stronger sense than that of *considered*, namely, that of comprehended, understood, which is its meaning in 4, 12 above, and uniformly elsewhere. It is construed absolutely, or without a direct object in the case first cited and in many others. (See above, 4, 12, and below, 7, 14. 8, 17. 21.) The reason given for this want of comprehension is that *their heart was hardened*, not in the specific sense of callous feeling or insensible affection, but in that of sluggish and obtuse intellect, of which the other may be both the cause and the effect. (See above, on 3, 5, and below, on 8, 17.) It is one of the most certain and mysterious facts in the condition of Christ's nearest followers during their state of pupilage, that they failed to comprehend what now appears self-evident or of the most elementary simplicity. We must not forget, however, that what now seems clear to us might well seem dark to them without the light of subsequent events, and also that this temporary slowness and obtuseness, which appears to have had some important purpose, is not more marked than their subsequent intelligence and perspicacity.

53. And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.

*And having crossed (the lake, from east to west) they came to (or upon) the land of Gennesaret*, a small district four miles long and two or three wide, on the west side of the sea of Galilee, or lake of Tiberias, to which it gave one of its names. (See above, on v. 14, and on 1, 16.) Josephus describes this district as the garden of the whole land and possessing a fertility and loveliness almost unparalleled. Capernaum appears to have been in or very near this delightful region, so that John (6, 17) describes this same voyage as a *voyage to Capernaum*. *Drew to the shore*, or *came to anchor near it*, or retaining the passive form of the original, were brought to anchor (or to land.)

54. And when they were come out of the ship, straight-way they knew him.

*And they going out (or as they went out) from the ship*, the men

of that place (Matt. 14, 35), *straightway knowing* (or immediately recognizing) *him*, whom they had often seen before, as they lived so near his home and the centre of his operations. (See above, on 1, 21. 2, 1.) It is an interesting thought, very often incidentally suggested in the gospels, that during the three years of our Saviour's public ministry, his person must have become perfectly familiar to the great mass of the population, at least in Galilee. This, with the certainty that he retains his human body, and is to appear in it hereafter upon earth as he already does in heaven, should preserve us from a tendency to look upon all sensible and bodily associations with the person of our Lord as superstitious and irreverent, an error into which some devout believers are betrayed by their aversion to the opposite extreme of gross familiarity and levity in speaking of his glorified humanity.

55. And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.

*Running about that whole surrounding country* (see above, on 1, 28), *they began*, i. e. at once without delay, and afterwards continued, see on vs. 2. 7. 34, and on 1, 45. 2, 23. 4, 1. 5, 17. 20), *upon beds* (or *pallets*, see above, on 2, 4) *to carry about those having* (*themselves*) *ill* (see above, on 1, 32. 2, 17) *wherever they heard that he was* (literally, *is*, the graphic present) *there*. The construction of the last clause is ambiguous, being understood by some as an example of the Hebrew idiom which combines the relative pronoun with the adverb *there*, to express our relative adverb *where*; but this would require a pronoun in the first place. Others refer the first of the two particles (*ōπον*) to the place where they heard of him, and the last (*έκει*) to the place where he actually was. But most interpreters prefer the simpler and more obvious construction which refers both particles to one and the same object, 'of whatever place they heard that he was there.' *The running about and carrying about* may refer to the same act, or the former to the spreading of the news and the latter to the actual bringing of the sick. The meaning is not that each one was carried from place to place in search of him, but that some were carried one way, some another, so as to fall in with him in some part of his circuit.

56. And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment; and as many as touched him were made whole.

*Country*, literally, *fields*, as in v. 36 above, and in such English names as St. Giles's or St. Martin's in the Fields, i. e. outside of old London. *Streets*, or more exactly, *markets* or *market-places*, as in every other case where it occurs (see below, on 7, 4. 12, 38), but with

greater latitude meaning than we now give to the English word. The Greek one (*ἀγορά*), according to its etymology and usage, means a place of meeting, especially for business, whether commercial or political, and therefore corresponding both to *forum* and *market*. The *agora* of ancient cities was an open place or square, sometimes immediately within the gates, but usually near the centre of the town. As denoting thoroughfares or public places, *streets* is therefore a substantially correct translation. *The sick*, or more exactly, *the infirm*, a synonymous expression with the one in v. 5, above. *If it were but*, literally, *even*, only (see above, on 5, 25.) This desire was only superstitious so far as it ascribed a magical effect to the mere touch, or regarded contact as essential to the healing power of the Saviour's word. It may have been his purpose to reach greater numbers in a given time without destroying all perceptible connection between the subject and the worker of the miracle. (Compare Acts 5, 15, 19, 12.) This is not a mere repetition of the statement in 1, 32-34, but designed to show that throughout the course as well as at the opening of our Saviour's ministry, his miracles were many, those recorded in detail being only a few selected samples, and also that his constant practice was to heal all who needed and desired it.

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## CHAPTER VII.

AFTER the manner of the best historians, Mark now resumes the history of Christ's relations and behaviour to his enemies, especially the great Pharisaic party, taking up the subject where he laid it down for the purpose of exemplifying his peculiar mode of teaching the doctrine of his kingdom (at the close of the third chapter.) He now records a fresh attack of the scribes and Pharisees upon his unceremonial practice with respect to their traditional exaggeration and perversion of the Levitical purifications, including a brief but interesting statement of their practice, and a full report of our Lord's authoritative teachings on the subject, both in public and in private, to his own disciples (1-23.) Connected with this, not only by immediate chronological succession, but in historical design and import, is the narrative of Christ's one recorded visit to the Gentile world, with a miracle of dis-possession there performed upon a Gentile subject, and among the most interesting in the gospels, both on this account and on account of the peculiar circumstances under which it was performed (24-30.) To this Mark adds another miracle, recorded only by himself, the healing of a dumb man in Decapolis, immediately after his return from Phenicia, and inserted here, not only on account of its immediate succession in the order of occurrence, but because, like the miracle before related, it exemplifies a manner of performance, as to outward acts, of which we have had previously no example (31-37.)

1. Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

The immediate chronological succession here is not affirmed, but highly probable from the marked chronological character of the whole chapter, both in Mark and Matthew, though the first words, *and there assemble* (or *are gathered*) *to him*, in themselves considered, might refer to an entirely different time and occasion. *The Pharisees*, i. e. members of the well-known party so called (see above, on 2, 16. 3, 6.) *Some of the Scribes*, the official guardians and expounders of the law, who were generally Pharisees and often priests or Levites (see above, on 3, 22), and do not therefore necessarily denote a distinct class here, but may be comprehended in the one first named, as if he had said, ‘the Pharisees (present, and among them) certain of the scribes, &c.’ Hence Matthew names them in the inverse order and speaks of both as *from Jerusalem*, i. e. belonging to the city (3, 21. 5, 26), or recently come down from it, as here expressly stated. This is only a new instance of the watch now kept upon our Lord by the rulers of the Jews, as we have seen already (see above, on 3, 22), and not a sign of curiosity in reference to the Saviour’s doctrine. *To him*, in the first clause may suggest, if it does not formally express, the idea of hostility (*at him or against him.*)

2. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen hands, they found fault.

Mark states much more minutely than Matthew the immediate occasion of the following discourse, to wit, the ceremonial negligence which these unfriendly lookers-on observed in the disciples when partaking of their ordinary food. As nothing is said of any joint repast or common meal, this incident naturally brings to view the constant and intrusive *surveillance* to which our Lord and his disciples were subjected, so that while they sometimes had not time or opportunity to take their meals at all (see above, on 6, 30), they seem to have scarcely ever taken them in private, or without the inspection both of friends and foes. In the present case, however, the reference is not so much to any joint repast even of the twelve among themselves as to their occasional eating as it were by snatches (*seeing some of his disciples eating.*) The *animus* with which these men attended is sufficiently betrayed by this petty and vexatious watching of the most innocent and private acts upon the part of the disciples. *Defiled* is too strong and at the same time not the literal translation, which is given in the margin (*common.*) This expression is derived from the ceremonial law, by which the Jews were separated from the other nations, and their sacred rites and utensils from all things, even of the same kind, which had not been thus sanctified or set apart to sacred uses, as distinguished from all secular and common uses. Hence arises the antithesis, at first sight so surprising, between *holy* and *common*. (Com-

pare Acts 10, 14, 15. Rom. 14, 14. Heb. 10, 29.) This word, as here applied to *hands*, means ceremonially impure, i. e. not ceremonially purified, by formal washing before eating. It cannot be too strongly impressed upon the reader's mind, that there is no allusion here to personal cleanliness or to washing as a necessary means of its promotion, but exclusively to ceremonial purity and ceremonial washing in a certain prescribed form, without which all the washing in the world would have gone for nothing in the eyes of these punctilious ritualists. *That is to say* (literally, *this is*) *with unwashed* (not dirty but ceremonially unpurified) *hands*, is Mark's own explanation of the singular term *common*, for the information of his Gentile readers. (See above, on 5, 41.) *Bread*, literally, *breads* or *loaves* (see above, on 6, 38), here put for food in general, as its principal but not its sole material in the case of the disciples. (See above, on 3, 20.)

3. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash (their) hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

Besides this explanation of the single word *common*, Mark subjoins a statement of the Jewish practice in relation to these washings, not contained in Matthew, thereby showing that he is not a transcriber or abridger of that gospel, and also that he had in view a different class of readers, namely, Gentiles, whereas Matthew wrote immediately for Jews, who needed no such explanation of their own religious usages. This is one of the clearest proofs of individuality and independence (not of the Holy Spirit but of one another) in the sacred writers, as evinced by the consistency of each in pursuing his own plan and using the means necessary for its execution. The idea that Mark copied and embellished Matthew is a perfectly gratuitous assumption, just as easy to deny as to affirm, or rather easier, as being obviously a mere subterfuge in order to escape the overwhelming evidence that Mark, as well as Matthew, wrote upon a systematic method and to answer a specific purpose. *The Pharisees and all the Jews*, not merely the great ceremonial party as such, but the Jews in general, at the period in question, were infected with this ceremonial superstition, though the Sadducees were probably less rigid and punctilious in its observance. The Greek word ( $\pi\gamma\mu\hat{\eta}$ ) qualifying *wash* is rendered both in the text (*oft*) and margin (*diligently*), either by conjecture from the context as requiring some such epithet, or from the analogy of certain similar but not kindred forms (such as  $\pi\kappa\nu\eta$ ,  $\pi\kappa\nu\acute{a}$ ,  $\pi\kappa\nu\hat{\omega}\acute{s}$ ), or on the authority of the oldest versions, one of which (the Vulgate *crebro*) has the textual, and another (the Peshito) the marginal translation. As the Greek word, in its secondary usage, is a measure of length, to wit, the distance from the elbow to the knuckles, some of the oldest commentators understand it here as meaning, *to the elbow*, and some later writers, *to the wrist*. But the latest interpreters reject this construction of the dative as a forced one, and insist upon the primary and strict sense of the Greek word, as denoting the clenched hand or fist,

especially as used in boxing. By the singular phrase, *washing with the fist*, they understand the rubbing of the fist in the hollow of the other hand, either as a peculiar ceremony used on such occasions, or as denoting regular and thorough washing in distinction from mere dipping or affusion. On any supposition the essential idea seems to be that of elaborate and formal washing. *Holding*, holding fast, a very strong term in Greek, the primary sense of which has been explained above (on 1, 31. 3, 21. 5, 41. 6, 17), but which here denotes, not mere reception or belief in theory, but pertinacious adherence in practice. *Tradition*, any thing delivered, with specific reference to usages and doctrines, sometimes applied to immediate apostolical teachings or commands (as in 1 Cor. 11, 2. 2 Th. 2, 15. 3, 6), but more commonly to precepts handed down from one generation to another, like the oral or unwritten law of the Jews, which they supposed to be referred to in Deuteronomy, and were strongly disposed (as appears from the Talmud) to place higher than the written word. To this code belong those additions to the law by which the Pharisees had gradually burdened and corrupted it (see below, on v. 9.) *The elders*, not the contemporary rulers of the people (as in 8, 31. 11, 27. 14, 43. 53. 15, 1), but the ancient fathers of the chosen race (as in Heb. 11, 2), to whom they believed this oral law to have been given. (Compare Matt. 5, 21. 27.)

4. And (when they come) from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, (as) the washing of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and tables.

This general statement of the Jewish practice is now made still more specific by enumerating several familiar cases or occasions to which it was applied. *Market*, the word explained above (on 6, 56) and here restricted in the version to the place where food is sold, although it may be taken in the wider sense of market-place or forum, as the place of public meeting. This is altogether natural if we supply *coming* (or *when they come*, as in the English Bible), and refer what follows to the washing of their own bodies, since the market (in the strict sense) was not the only place where they were liable to be ceremonially defiled, but such exposure existed in all public places and assemblies, but especially at funerals, in attending on the sick, &c. On the other hand, if we supply *what comes* (or is brought from, or belongs to the market (see above, on v. 1) then the latter may be taken in its usual sense, and the clause will refer to the washing of the meat there purchased. This last construction is not inconsistent with the middle voice of the ensuing verb, which does not necessarily mean *wash themselves*, but may mean *wash (for) themselves* (the food procured in market.) Nor is it any valid objection to this view, though urged by eminent interpreters, that such washing takes place as a matter of course everywhere; for this is no less true of manual ablution before eating

in all civilized countries, and especially among the orientals, not only now but in the time of Christ, who no doubt practised it with his disciples. In either case the reference is not to washing (either meats or persons) for the sake of cleanliness, but, as we have already seen, for ritual or ceremonial purposes, as indicated by the word *baptize*, which, in the Greek of the New Testament, means neither on the one hand simply to *wash*, nor on the other to *immerse*, but to *wash symbolically*, or as a religious rite, whether by immersion or affusion (see above, on 1, 4.) The middle form here used may either mean, *they bathe (themselves)*, or they symbolically wash the things brought from market, before they will partake of them. But this was only a small part of the restriction which they placed upon themselves. *Many other (things) there be* (in modern English, *are*) *which they received*, from others by tradition, as suggested by the Greek verb which is the correlative of that from which tradition is derived. What the fathers *delivered* the sons *received*. *To hold*, or *hold fast*, in the strong sense explained above (on v. 3.) *Baptisms*, not immersions, which would be absurd, if not impossible, in one of the cases specified, but ceremonial washings, uncommanded and traditional perversions of the legal ablutions or Levitical purifications, as prescribed in Lev. xii–xv. and restricted, for reasons easily assignable, to certain states of body representing the defilement of sin, but by the so-called oral law extended without meaning to the most familiar acts of private life and even to the ordinary furniture of houses. There could not be a clearer proof of the absurd as well as irreligious character of Pharisaism than is afforded by this pitiful exaggeration and extension of an arbitrary but significant observance, divinely instituted for a temporary purpose, to a multitude of other cases not included in the legal requisition, and in which it must either be contemptible because unmeaning, or pernicious because looked upon as having an intrinsic virtue, magical or moral. Such were the *baptisms* of the Pharisees, and such would those of Christians be, if thus perverted or displaced from their true position in the Christian system. The general term (*baptisms*) is then further specified by several nouns in the genitive plural, denoting objects which they thus superstitiously baptized. *Cups*, drinking vessels, a noun derived indirectly from the verb to drink. *Pots*, in Greek a word admitting of two wholly different derivations, one from the verb ( $\xi\acute{e}w$ ) to *polish*, according to which it would be descriptive of the surface or material, and one from the Latin *sextus* or *sextarius*, meaning the sixth part of some larger measure and nearly corresponding to an English pint, but here put for any small vessel of about that capacity or size, without regard to its precise form, just as we have pint-bottles, pint-mugs, pint-bowls, &c. If this last be the true interpretation, as the best modern writers are agreed, it affords another instance of Mark's Latinisms, and another confirmation of the old opinion that he wrote immediately for Gentile and most probably for Roman readers, to whom this whole description would be highly interesting and instructive, if not absolutely necessary to their comprehension of the more general statement which precedes it. As the first term in this catalogue denotes the use, and

the next the size, of the domestic utensils referred to, so the third relates to the material. *Brazen vessels* is in Greek and might be in English one word, *brasses, coppers* (see above, on 6, 8), a term actually used to denote vessels, although commonly of greater size than those intended here, which were probably small domestic utensils, perhaps employed in cooking, and distinguished as metallic from the wooden and stone vessels, also used in ancient oriental households. Those of earth, according to the law (Lev. 15, 12), when ceremonially unclean, were to be broken. *Tables* (in the margin *beds*), i. e. couches, any thing on which men commonly recline whether for sleep, or according to the later usage of the ancients (see above, on 2, 15), to partake of food, which accounts for the word used in the text of our Bible. That these couches were immersed in every instance of ceremonial washing, can only be thought probable, or even possible, by those who are under the necessity of holding that this Greek word not only means to dip or plunge originally, but unlike every other word transferred to a religious use, is always used in that exclusive and invariable sense, without modification or exception. To those who have no purpose to attain by such a paradox, the place before us will afford, if not conclusive evidence at least a strong presumption, that beds (to say no more) might be baptized without immersion.

5. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

After this important explanation for the benefit of Gentile readers, Mark proceeds, as Matthew (15, 1. 2) does without it, to record the question which these Pharisaic baptists put to Christ as to the practice of his followers and by necessary consequence his own. *Then*, afterwards, i. e. after seeing the disciples eat without a previous ceremonial ablution, which they seem to have regarded as zealous Papists now regard the entrance of a heretic into their churches without genuflexion, crossing; or the anabaptism of being sprinkled with holy water. This particle (*επειτα*) is not found in some of the oldest manuscripts and latest critical editions which read simply (*kai and*). *They ask*; or rather *question*, catechize him (see above on 5, 9.) *Why*, literally, *for* (i. e. on account of) *what* (cause or reason), as in 2, 18 above. *Thy disciples*, pupils, learners, so called because taught by thee, for whose behaviour as to such points thou art consequently answerable. This is the obvious spirit of the question, though civility or cowardice restricted it in form to the disciples, which may also be explained by the fact that it was not Christ himself, nor even all of the disciples, but only some of them (v. 2), who happened to be seen by these intrusive censors, perhaps simply appeasing their hunger with a morsel of necessary food, without any formal meal at all, but likewise without any previous ablution. The question, as in all such cases (see above, on 2, 7. 16. 18. 5, 35. 6, 2.), though in form a general request for explanation, is in fact a challenge or demand by what right they thus

acted, and by implication a denial that they had any right so to act at all. Whether *disciples* has its wide or narrow sense is a point of no exegetical importance, as the meaning of the question is the same in either case. *Walk*, or more exactly, *walk about* (see above 1, 16. 6, 48), a common figure in all languages for habitual conduct, mode of life, or *conversation*, in its older sense, involving the same metaphor. *Walk not* may have been the milder or more covert form in which they clothed the idea of violation or positive transgression, as here expressed by Matthew (15, 2), and by implication claiming the authority of law for these *traditions of the elders*. *But* (on the contrary, so far from walking *after* or *according to* this sacred rule) *eat bread* (in the strict sense, or partake of food, see above, on v. 2) *with unwashen* (or according to the latest text, *with common or profane*) *hands*, which reading substitutes the idiomatic language of v. 2 for Mark's own explanation of it.

6. He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with (their) lips, but their heart is far from me.

*And* (or *but*, not expressed here in the version) *he answering said to them, that* (*ὅτι*, not expressed in English, see above, on 1, 15. 37. 40. 2, 12. 3, 11. 21. 22. 28. 5, 23. 26. 35. 6, 4. 16. 18. 23. 35.) *Well*, not truly or correctly, which would be superfluous as an encomium on an inspired prophecy, both here and in Acts 28, 25, where Paul applies the same term to the Holy Ghost himself; but finely, admirably, or appropriately, exactly, in allusion to the singular coincidence between Isaiah's inspired description of his own contemporaries and the character and conduct of their children's children in the time of Christ. It is not however a mere accommodation of the passage to a foreign subject, since Isaiah's words are not confined to those whom they immediately described; but this very fact, that a description could be so framed as to represent with equal fidelity originals who lived so many centuries apart, is itself a proof of inspiration and a ground for the applause and admiration here expressed. *Esaias* is the Greek form of *Isaiah*, like *Elias* for *Elijah* in 6, 15. As *Isaiah* itself is a modification of the Hebrew form (*Jeshaiyah, Jeshaiahu*), it would have been better to employ either it or the Greek *Esaias* in the version of both Testaments, the variation of the name confusing uninstructed readers. This is still more true of *Jesus*, the Greek form of *Joshua*, when used to designate the Son of Man (as in Acts 7, 45. Heb. 4, 8.) *Hath Isaiah prophesied*, or rather, *did Isaiah prophesy*, of old, so long ago, the interval being a material idea, which the perfect tense does not convey, at least so well, because it properly denotes an action still continued to the present time. *Of* (i. e. about, concerning) *you hypocrites*, should be connected with the adverb, *well*. The meaning is not that the Jews of Christ's time were the formal and direct theme of the prophecy, which would not have been spoken of as so remarkable, but rather that in speaking

of his own contemporaries, he drew an admirable picture of their children in the time of Christ. But although this does not require us to interpret the original passage as a specific and exclusive prophecy respecting Christ's contemporaries, it does require us to interpret it so as to include them, which can only be secured by making it descriptive of the unbelieving Jews, not at one time merely, but throughout the period of the old dispensation, an assumption perfectly confirmed by history. *Hypocrites*, a Greek noun originally meaning one who answers or responds, with particular allusion to oracular responses, explanations, and advices; then one who answers in a colloquy or conversation, with particular allusion to dramatic dialogue; then one who acts upon the stage, an actor; then metaphorically one who acts a borrowed part; and lastly, a dissembler, a deceiver, one whose words and actions do not indicate his real thoughts and feelings. This last sense of the noun, the only one which it retains in modern languages, is not found in the classics; but the primitive or corresponding verb meant to dissemble at least as early as Demosthenes and Polybius. It is doubtful, however, whether the noun, even in the Greek of the New Testament, has always the strong sense which later usage puts upon it, and which sometimes does not seem entirely appropriate, as in Luke 12, 56, and here, in both which places the connection agrees better with the older sense of one who acts a part, who wears a mask, who is contented with an outside show, including not deliberate deceivers merely, but the self-deceived, or those who really mistake the outward for the inward, the apparent for the real. *As it is written*, or more exactly, *has been written*, the perfect tense being here in its appropriate place as meaning, not merely that it was once written by Isaiah, but that it had ever since been written, i. e. had remained on record, as it still does in the extant writings of Isaiah (29, 13.) The quotation is a free one from the Septuagint version, the variations being unimportant to the Saviour's purpose. The first two clauses, which Matthew gives in full, Mark contracts into one, or rather he begins with the second. *Is far from me*, in Hebrew, *it removes far from me*; but this variation is found also in the Septuagint.

7. Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching (for) doctrines the commandments of men.

*But* (or *and*), the usual connective ( $\delta\epsilon$ ), *in vain they worship me*, a thought implied though not expressed in the original, and therefore not improperly supplied by the Seventy and sanctioned by our Lord or his biographers. The literal translation of the Hebrew words is, *and their fearing me* (i. e. their worship) *is* (or *has become*) *a precept of men, a thing taught*. This taken by itself might seem to mean that they served God merely in obedience to human authority, and would then imply no censure on the persons thus commanding, but only on the motives of those by whom they were obeyed. But in our Saviour's application of the passage to the hypocrites of his day, he has reference particularly to religious teachers, as corrupting the law by their unauthorized additions.

8. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, (as) the washing of pots and cups; and many other such like things ye do.

This verse assigns the reason for applying to Christ's hearers the description of their fathers by Isaiah. (This is no less true of you than of them) *for laying aside*, literally, leaving, letting go (see above, on 2, 5, 3, 28, 4, 12, where it is applied to sin and means to leave unpunished), either in the sense of relaxing its requirements to themselves and others, or in that of abandoning and disregarding it, not absolutely but in comparison with their traditions. *The commandment of God* may mean the aggregate of his commandments, usually called his *law*, or more strictly, the particular commandment set aside in any given case, for instance the one specified in v. 10. *Hold the tradition*, in the sense before explained (on v. 3.) But instead of *elders*, as in that place, we have here *of men*, in strong antithesis to *God*, suggesting both the sin and folly of their conduct in postponing the express recorded law of God to the vague, dubious, unauthorized tradition of mere men. This sweeping charge is then made more specific by referring to the case which had occasioned it, and citing as a memorable instance of their vain and impious substitutions for divine commands, their *baptisms of pots and cups*, all which words have already been explained (on v. 4.) But lest he should be understood as limiting his censure to this one case, he renews his general charge by adding, *and many such like (or nearly alike) things ye do.*

9. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

*And he said to them*, a favourite formula of this evangelist, not found in Matthew, who also omits the preceding verse and gives the one before us an interrogative form, retorting their own question (Matt. 15, 3.) *Full well*, precisely the same word that is employed above in v. 6, and gratuitously varied here in the translation, so as to obscure the allusion in the one place to the other. *Well* did Isaiah prophesy of you . . . . and *well* do ye fulfil the prophecy. The meaning of the adverb in both cases is identical; but it is applied seriously in one and ironically in the other. As if he had said, 'nobly did the prophet do his part when he described you thus, and nobly you do yours when you reject &c.' There is peculiar fitness in the verb here used, which, as we have already seen (on 6, 26), originally means to displace, which applies exactly to their impious postponement of God's law to man's tradition, while the secondary meaning of contemptuous rejection is no less appropriate in its application both to things and persons, i. e. to the law or precept and to him who gave it. *Keep*, in the last clause is a different expression from the one in vs. 3, 4, 8, the main idea there being that of *holding fast*, or obstinate adhesion, but in this case that of *watching*, guarding or observing. This is also the old English sense

of *keep*, as used in our translation, though in modern parlance it is almost limited to that of retaining or preserving, which is only a collateral deduction from the same original idea.

10. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

Not only in this one case of ceremonial baptisms did they thus reject and nullify God's precept, but in others, of far more importance, because relating not to rites but moral duties, not to the abuse of positive and temporary institutions, but to the neglect of the most tender natural relations. Of this he gives a single instance, but a most affecting one, which utters volumes as to the spirit and the tendency of Pharisaic superstition. The sum and substance of it is that the observance of their vain tradition was considered and enforced by them as more obligatory than the sacred duty which the child owes to the parent, by the law of nature and the law of God. *For Moses said*, i. e. God commanded through him (Matt. 15, 4.) In these two parallels we have the clearest recognition of the code or system quoted in the next clause as the work of Moses and the law of God. He then quotes the first or preceptive clause of the fifth commandment (Ex. 20, 12. Deut. 5, 16), leaving out the promise or inducement as irrelevant to his present purpose, which relates exclusively to the precept, but substituting for it the severe law inflicting capital punishment on those who carried filial disobedience to the length of cursing or reviling, literally, speaking evil of, the opposite, both in etymology and usage, of the verb employed above in 6, 41, and there explained. Though here in strong antithesis to *honour*, it does not directly mean to *dishonour*, but denotes specifically one of the easiest and worst ways of doing so, to wit, by abusive and insulting language. *Whoso curseth*, literally, *the (one or the man) cursing (or reviling) father or mother*, an indefinite form used by both evangelists, and differing alike from the original and Septuagint version, both which have the pronoun (*thy*) as in the preceding clause where both evangelists retain it. This exact agreement in so slight a difference is not to be explained by the hypothesis of servile imitation or transcription on the part of either, but by the supposition that these were the very words (or their exact equivalents) which Jesus uttered, and which therefore must have some significance, however faint the shade of meaning which they may express. That they do express one must be felt by every reader even of a literal translation, though it is not easy to subject it to analysis or definition. Perhaps it may be simply stated thus, that the definite expression in the other clause (*thy father and thy mother*) and in the original of this clause (*his father and his mother*) is designed to individualize, before the mind of every hearer or reader of the law, the very pair to whom he owes allegiance, while the vaguer phrase here used (*father or mother*) rather calls up the idea of parents in general as a class or species, but so as rather to enhance than to extenuate their claims upon their chil-

dren, by presenting those claims in the abstract and the aggregate. As if he had said, ‘he who can dishonour by his curses such a sacred object as a father or a mother.’ *Let him die the death*, an English imitation of the Hebrew idiom which combines a finite tense and an infinitive of the same verb to express intensity, repetition, certainty, or any other accessory notion not belonging to the essential import of the verb itself. In the original passage our translators have expressed the qualifying adjunct (that of certainty) without copying the form (*shall surely be put to death*), while here the form is rendered prominent by a pretty close approximation to the Hebrew in the combination of the cognate verb and noun, a modification of the idiom not unknown in other languages. The imitation is indeed much closer than in Greek, where the verb is not the ordinary verb *to die*, but one which originally means to *end* or *finish*, often joined with *life*, and then elliptically used without it to express the same idea (that of ending life or dying.) The strict translation of the whole phrase therefore would be, *let him end with death*, the meaning both of it and of the Hebrew, *let him surely die*.

11. But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, (It is) Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, (he shall be free.)

The antithesis is still kept up between what God said and what they said (see above, on v. 8), both being put into the form of a command or law. Having given that of God, with its tremendous sanction in the verse preceding, he now contrasts with it that of the traditional or oral lawyers. *But* (on the other hand, on your part) *ye say*, not in so many words, perhaps not formally at all, but practically by what you encourage and allow, both in yourselves and others. *If a man say*, may possibly have been a real formula of casuistical theology among the Jews, as there is something not unlike it in the Talmud. At all events it pleased our Lord to put the spirit of their conduct and of the system upon which it rested into this technical and formal shape, in order more completely to expose its wickedness and folly. *Shall say* is too categorical and positive a version of the aorist subjunctive which denotes a hypothetical contingency, or something which may happen or may not. *To his father or mother*, literally, *the father or the mother*, the pronoun being still omitted, as in v. 10, but the article inserted. *Corban*, a Hebrew word of frequent occurrence in the law of Moses, and immediately translated into Greek by Mark according to his custom (see above, on 5, 41), *that is to say* (literally, *which is*) *a gift*, a word denoting gifts in general but specifically used in Homeric and Hellenistic Greek to mean a votive offering or a gift to God. In this restricted sense it answers to the Hebrew *corban*, which according to its etymology means any thing brought near or presented, but in usage what is thus brought near to God. In this sense, it is applied like the corresponding verb (*hikrib*) to all the offerings of the Mosaic ritual, animal and vegetable, bloody and blood-

less. (See Lev. 2, 1. 4. 12. 13. 7, 13. 9, 7. 15.) In the later Hebrew and Chaldee, it was applied still more extensively to all religious offerings, even those not sacrificial, but not to these exclusively as some allege. This one word seems to have been the prescribed form in such cases, so that by simply saying "Corban," a man might devote the whole or any part of his possessions to religious uses, i. e. to the maintenance of the temple service by the purchase of victims or the sustentation of the priests and Levites. *Whatever thou* (the parent thus addressed) *mightest be profited by me* (i. e. whatever assistance or advantage thou mightest have derived from me) is Corban or devoted to religious uses like a sacrificial victim. That such things were permitted and applauded may be proved by certain dicta of the Talmud, and especially by a famous dispute between Rabbi Eliezer and his brethren, in which the very act here described was vindicated by the latter. It is commonly agreed that there is here an instance of the figure called aposiopesis, in which the apodosis or logical conclusion of the sentence is suppressed or left to be supplied by the reader. Such constructions, whether reckoned beauties or defects, are common in the best classical writers. The thought to be supplied here is, 'he does no wrong,' 'he is at liberty to do so,' or the like. As if he had said, you know full well what your response would be to such an offer, and you ought to know its practical effect, recorded in the following verse.

12. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

That effect is, that ye no longer suffer him (even if he would), or suffer him no longer (if he would not), probably the latter, as the verb (the same with that in v. 8.) even with the negative would hardly be employed to denote active prohibition, but rather signifies their culpable connivance at such base neglect. 'If he wishes to do nothing more for them, you suffer it.' *For them*, for their benefit, support, assistance.

13. Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered; and many such like things do ye.

Having given this revolting instance of the practical result to which their treatment of God's precepts tended, he returns to the generic charge which it was stated to illustrate. *Making void*, invalidating, nullifying, a verb not used in classic Greek, but formed directly from an adjective familiarly applied by Plato and Thucydides to laws, and representing them (according to its etymology) as destitute of force, invalid, null and void. This was the actual effect, whatever may have been the purpose, of their ceremonial and traditional morality, by which they practically nullified *the word of God*, i. e. his precept or his revelation. The next clause cannot be exactly rendered into English for want of a verb corresponding to *tradition*. The form of the original

may be made intelligible to an English reader by the awkward imitation, your deliverance (in the Scotch sense) which you have delivered, or your handing down which you have handed down. The address may be either to the whole race as represented by his hearers, or to themselves as delivering and enforcing these traditions by authority. Once more he comes back to the general charge, reminding them that these were only samples of their impious and lawless practice.

14. And when he had called all the people (unto him), he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one (of you), and understand.

Thus far he had addressed the Scribes and Pharisees themselves, but now invokes a larger audience. *And calling to all the crowd*, i. e. addressing them, or *calling the crowd to* (him), as in 3, 13. 23. 6, 7, which does not necessarily imply a change of place, but merely a request for their particular attention, as expressed in the last clause. Still less is it implied that the multitude at large had not heard what is said in the preceding context. All that is meant is that, after having answered the demand of his opponents in the presence of the people, he now calls the attention of the latter to the same great subject, as one of practical and universal interest, because relating to the very principle of all morality. *The people*, literally, *the crowd*, or promiscuous assemblage (see above, on 2, 4. 3, 9. 4, 1. 5, 27. 6, 33) as distinguished from the prominent and leading men, and *all the crowd*, as distinguished from a part or from a few. *Hear me*, listen to me, not an unmeaning form but a distinct intimation that he had something of importance to communicate (see above, on 4, 3. 9.) *And understand*, give intelligent attention, not merely to my words but to their meaning. *Every one of you*, in Greek simply, *all*, another intimation that the subject was of universal interest. This double "all" has been preserved by Mark alone, although the rest of the verse is given, almost word for word, by Matthew (15, 10.)

15. 16. There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him, can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

Having exposed the folly of the prevalent ceremonial superstition as to uncommanded baptisms or religious washings, and its wickedness in setting aside moral obligations, the Saviour now pursues the same course in a still more public manner with respect to the most prevalent and favourite of all merely ritual distinctions, that of clean and unclean meats, which had then become, and still continues, the chief bar to social intercourse between Jews and Gentiles. The very object of the law upon this subject (as recorded in Lev. xi. and Deut. xiv.) was to separate the chosen race from every other by restrictions on their food

which should render it impossible for them to live together, or to interchange the ordinary courtesies of life, without a constant violation, upon one side, of religious duty. This effect had been abundantly secured for ages in the practice of all conscientious Jews, but with the necessary incidental evil of a constant disposition, even on the part of such, to mistake a positive and temporary regulation for a perpetual invariable law, and to regard the forbidden meats as having an intrinsic efficacy to defile, not only ceremonially but morally. In opposition to this groundless and pernicious error, Christ propounds the simple truth, but in a form adapted to arrest the popular attention and impress itself upon the memory by something of antithesis and even paradox. *A man*, literally, *the man*, which may either be the Greek equivalent to our generic "man" without the article, or be taken strictly as denoting the particular man eating or receiving food in any supposed case. *Entering into him*, i. e. into the mouth (Matt. 15, 11) as food or nourishment, *which can (is able, a distinct verb, not a mere auxiliary) defile him*, literally, *make him common or profane*, a verb derived from the Greek adjective employed above (v. 2) and there explained. *But* (the other branch of the antithesis) *the (things) coming out of him*, proceeding from him (the exact correlative or opposite, in form as well as sense, of the preceding verb), i. e. from his mouth (Matt. 15, 11) in language, or more generally in his conduct, as the expression of his thoughts and character. *These are the (things) defiling (or profaning, desecrating) the man*. The paradoxical character of this important statement arises from its solemnly affirming in a moral sense, what was not true if taken in a ceremonial sense, and therefore might at first sight seem, and did no doubt to many seem, directly contradictory to an express divine commandment. But this only deepened the impression of the true sense when discovered or revealed, as in all the paradoxes which may be said to form a striking characteristic of our Saviour's teachings, but which no mere man, at least no uninspired man, can imitate without the risk of doing far more harm than good, and of adding one more instance to the many which illustrate and confirm the fact that "fools rush in where angels fear to tread." What our Saviour here denies is not that the partaking of forbidden meats was ceremonially defiling, i. e. subjected those who did so to certain ceremonial disabilities and rendered necessary certain rites of purification; for all this was explicitly revealed in scripture and embodied in the practice of the Jewish church from the very beginning of the ceremonial dispensation, which was not yet at an end. Nor does he here deny that by transgressing this part of the law a man incurred the moral guilt of disobedience, which would have opened a wide door to lawless and ungodly license. It is not the authority or obligation of the precept that he calls in question, but its ground and purpose, as usually apprehended by the people and expounded by their spiritual leaders. Certain meats had been prohibited by Moses under the divine direction, for a temporary end of great importance but ere long to be forever superseded, i. e. to secure the separation of the Jews from other races till the change of dispensations, and in the mean time to symbolize the difference between heathen-

ish corruptions and the holiness which ought to have adorned the church or chosen people. But by gradual departure from this clearly revealed purpose of the legal prohibitions now in question, they had come to look upon the unclean meats as *per se* morally defiling, and by necessary consequence, upon the strict use of the clean meats as intrinsically purifying, or at least meritorious in the sight of God. This is the error here refuted or condemned, and not obedience to the dietetic laws of Moses while the system was still binding, upon which these words of Christ have neither a remote nor an immediate bearing, as some eminent interpreters imagine, and as many of his hearers no doubt thought at that time, notwithstanding the admonitory warning against inattention and misapprehension, which we learn from Mark, though not from Matthew, that he uttered upon this as on so many other similar occasions (see above, on 4, 9. 23.) *If any (one, not man) have ears to hear* (i. e. the faculty of hearing given to him for the very purpose), *let him hear* (let him use it upon this occasion when, if ever, he will find it advantageous so to do.)

17. And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

*When he entered into a* (not *the*) *house*, or more generally, *into house* (i. e. within doors), as the same phrase elsewhere means *home* or *at home*, when the reference is to his return from other places to Capernaum (see above, on 2, 1. 3, 19.) *From* (away from) *the people*, literally, *the crowd or multitude* (see above, on v. 14.) *His disciples*, probably but not necessarily the twelve, since others were admitted to his private presence, and are elsewhere spoken of as joining with the twelve in precisely such inquiries (see above, on 4, 10.) *Asked him*, questioned him, in a particular and earnest manner (see above, on v. 5 and on 5, 9.) *About* (concerning) *the parable*, or according to the latest critics, *asked him the parable*, the same construction as in 4, 10, but only differing in form from the common text and version. Mark omits a brief but interesting dialogue preserved by Matthew (15, 12-14), as to the impression made upon the Pharisees by what our Lord had said in public, and the ultimate effect of their erroneous teachings on themselves and others. Another circumstance preserved by Matthew (15, 15) is that Peter was the spokesman upon this occasion, as on many others even when he is not named in any of the gospels, which makes Mark's omission here of less importance. *Parable*, the word used in both accounts, has here its vaguest sense of something enigmatical, not obvious in meaning. One interpreter supposes the disciples to have been led, by their habit of inquiring about parables, to use the word for any thing requiring explanation.

18. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, (it) cannot defile him?

Although this is not a harsh reproof, it certainly involves a censure on the followers of Christ for their continued share in the prevailing error which he had just refuted and denounced. This implies that what they failed to understand was not a mystery (see above, on 4, 21) requiring special revelation to disclose it, ignorance of which could not have been condemned as culpable, but something clear already, if not from the nature of the case from the word of God. *And he says to them* (in answer to their question or request for explanation.) *So* (thus, i. e. like the rest) *even ye* (or *ye also*, my most favoured and enlightened followers). *Without understanding*, in Greek a single word which might be rendered *unintelligent* (the opposite in form as well as sense of that employed in Matt. 11, 25. Acts 13, 7. 1 Cor. 1, 19.) It is applied by Paul (Rom. 1, 21. 31) to the irrationality of sin, but also in the same epistle (10, 19) to the ignorance and unintelligence of heathen or barbarians. *Do ye not perceive*, a verb applied by Homer and Xenophon to bodily vision, but in the Greek of the New Testament to intellectual perception only, sometimes with the accessory notion of attention (see below, on 13, 14, and compare 2 Tim. 2, 7), which may also be included here (and in 8, 17 below.) ‘Are you not sufficiently attentive to perceive &c.? ’ This again implies that what they misconceived was no mysterious secret but an obvious and patent truth, which they could not have attentively considered without justly apprehending it. *Whatsoever entereth*, literally, *every (thing) entering into the man* (here correctly rendered with the article) *cannot* (is not capable or able, see above, on v. 15, to) *defile him* (make him common or unholy in a moral sense.) This was almost self-evident, and yet the people had lost sight of it, and even the disciples did not see it clearly.

### 19. Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats.

The reason of this impossibility is obvious, to wit, that food does not affect the mind or soul but only the corporeal organs, which are not moral agents or susceptible of moral changes. *Heart*, not the seat of the affections merely, nor the mind as opposed to the affections, but the whole soul as distinguished from the body (see above, on 2, 6. 4, 15. 6, 52.) *The belly*, not the entire body, nor the abdomen exclusively, but the whole interior cavity (the Greek word originally meaning *hollow*), in which are lodged the organs of digestion here especially referred to, namely, the stomach and intestines. The last clause carries out the idea, that the food never goes beyond the body or reaches the mind or soul, by suggesting that the whole course of the aliment, received through the mouth into the stomach and intestines, can be traced as all exclusively corporeal, from its entrance to its exit. To this is added at the close of the whole sentence a suggestion that even physically food is not defiling, since that part of the process of digestion which is most offensive is in fact a purifying one, because it carries off the impure portion of the food, leaving only what is nutritive and healthful. How absurd then to imagine that the moral and spiritual

state of man can be affected by the food which he consumes. *Draught*, drain, sink, or privy, a word belonging to the later Greek. *All meats*, or varieties of food received into the mouth and stomach.

20. And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

*But he said*, Mark's favourite transition from one topic or one portion of it to another, here completing the antithesis, by adding to the negative account of what does not defile a man the positive description of what does. *That*, (*ὅτι*) excluded by our idiom as in many other cases (see above, on v. 6.) *The (thing) coming out of the man*, i. e. proceeding from him in a moral sense. The double *out* (*ἐκ*) prefixed in Greek both to verb and noun adds strength to the antithesis or contrast (see above, on 1, 27.) *That* (*ἐκεῖνο*, an emphatic pronoun tantamount to *not this*, not what I have just described) *profanes the man* (makes him common or unholy in the proper sense.) 'Food, when it enters, enters not into the soul but the stomach and the bowels, and even when it is finally excluded, rather cleanses than defiles; but there is something, in another sense proceeding from man, which does really defile him.' What it is, he teaches in the next verse.

21. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders—

*Out of the heart*, the soul, as the seat both of the intellect and the affections (see above, on v. 19.) *Proceed*, come out or forth, the same verb that is used in the preceding verse. *Evil thoughts* is in Greek doubly definite, the article being written twice, *the thoughts, the evil (ones.)* (For examples of the same construction, which is foreign from our idiom, see above, on 1, 26, and again below, on v. 23.) *Thoughts*, not mere ideas or incoherent notions, but reasonings, calculations, plans, or purposes, implying action both of mind and heart in the restricted sense. Of these he now enumerates particular examples, in the plural number, either to denote the multitude of sinful acts included under each description or the variety of forms and circumstances under which each sin may be committed. *Adulteries*, violations of the marriage vow; *fornications*, violations of chastity by unmarried persons; both being breaches of the seventh commandment (Ex. 20, 14) as interpreted by Christ himself (Matt. 5, 28.) *Murders*, unlawful and malicious homicides, placed first by Matthew (15, 19.) These crimes, interpreted with proper latitude, include the worst offences against human justice and the order of society.

22. Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness—

*Thefts*, including all surreptitious violations of the property of others, and according to later Greek usage even those of a more vio-

lent and open nature, highway-robbers being still called *klephts* (essentially the same word here employed) in modern Greece. The opposite change has taken place in English, *thieves* and *robbers* being never now confounded as they often are in our Bible (see below, on 14, 48, 15, 27, and compare Luke 10, 30.) *Covetousness*, a very inadequate translation both in form and substance, as the Greek noun is plural, like all those before and the one after it, and has a much greater latitude of meaning than its representative in English, though included in it. The Greek word, according to its etymology and primary usage, means the possession of more than others; then the desire to possess more, with its usual concomitants of grasping greediness, ambitious arrogance, and fraudulent contrivance; in all which senses it is used by Herodotus, Thucydides, and Plato. In the place of this word Matthew (15, 19) substitutes *false testimonies*, both (or their equivalents in Aramaic) having probably been uttered by our Saviour. *Wickedness* in Greek is also plural and more definite in meaning, being not a comprehensive term including all the rest, but a specific one denoting evil dispositions, and might therefore be translated by the unusual but expressive and appropriate form, *malignities*. The remaining words are in the singular, which seems to be an accidental or euphonic change, as there is nothing in the nature of the sins described to require or account for such a difference. *Deceit*, fraud, including all forms of dishonesty not comprehended under *theft*. *Lasciviousness*, in classic Greek a word denoting all excess and extravagance, applied by Isaeus and Demosthenes to arrogance and insolence, but by the later writers limited to libidinous excesses or unbridled lust. *An evil eye*, the visible expression being put for the inward disposition or affection, which would seem from a comparison of Matt. 20, 15, to be envy. *Blasphemy*, another outward manifestation used to represent an inward disposition, namely proud and spiteful anger, that which finds expression in reviling and abusive words not only against man but God (see above, on 2, 7, 3, 28.) This is also given, but in the plural form, by Matthew (15, 19), who omits the four particulars immediately preceding and the two which follow. *Pride*, in Greek a more specific term originally meaning the appearance of one object above others, then conspicuous and marked superiority; but applied to persons almost always in the bad sense of haughtiness or arrogance towards God and man. (Compare the cognate adjective in Luke 1, 51, and *διανοία* there with *διαλογισμοί* here.) *Foolishness*, senselessness, absurdity, an attribute of all sin as essentially irrational, but specially apparent in the character and conduct of some sinners. The primitive adjective or noun (*ἀφρων*) is common in the Greek of the New Testament, but the derivative (*ἀφροσύνη*) occurs only here and in one of Paul's epistles, where he thrice applies it to himself (2 Cor. 11, 1, 17, 21), as he does the other four times in the same epistle (11, 16, 12, 6, 11.) The allegation that Mark adds to Matthew's catalogue a number of irrelevant particulars, is perfectly gratuitous, as no rule can be laid down for determining how many might be given, and our Saviour may have uttered a still greater number, out of which one evangelist selected more, the other less, as best adapted to his own immediate purpose.

23. All these evil things come from within and defile the man.

This long enumeration of particulars is followed by a summing up or repetition of the general statement which they were intended to exemplify. *All these evils from within come forth and desecrate the man* (or render him unholy) not ceremonially but morally. Here again, as in v. 21, the peculiar Greek construction and idiomatic repetition of the article imparts a force and at the same time a precision to the sentence which can only be imperfectly retained in English even by a bald translation. *All these, the evil, i. e. all these things, these evil things.* *Evil*, the word combined with *eye* in the preceding verse, and meaning here as there, not only sinful in the general, but wicked, spiteful, or malicious in particular.

24. And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into a house, and would have no man know (it); but he could not be hid.

*Thenee*, i. e. from the place where the foregoing words were uttered. But where was this? The last particular place mentioned was Gennesaret (6, 53), but followed by a notice of his visiting "that whole surrounding country" (55), and entering into "villages, cities, and fields" (56.) This may seem to cut off the connection and prevent our ascertaining the locality referred to here. But as *thence* implies a definite place previously mentioned, and as the general statement in 6, 53–56 is incidentally and parenthetically introduced, and relates not so much to what occurred at any one time as to the general and constant practice, as appears from the use of the imperfect tense, it is still most probable that the reference is here to the land (or district) of Gennesaret, or to the neighbouring city of Capernaum (see above, on 6, 53, and compare John 6, 17.) *Arising*, standing up, an idiomatic phrase of frequent occurrence in the Greek of the New Testament, and often denoting nothing more than what we mean by starting, setting out, putting one's self in motion, especially though not exclusively in reference to journeys. *Went*, or more exactly *went away*, i. e. withdrew, retreated (Matt. 15, 21), from the malice of his enemies, as some suppose, or as others, from the crowd and bustle even of his friends and followers. It is probable, however, that a higher and more important motive led to this retreat, to wit, the purpose to evince by one act of his public life that, though his personal ministry was to the Jews (see below, on v. 27, and compare Matt. 15, 24. Rom. 15, 8), his saving benefits were also for the Gentiles. It is important to remember that these movements were not made at random or fortuitously brought about, as infidel interpreters delight to represent, and some of their believing admirers do not venture to deny, but deliberately ordered in accordance with a definite design, the reality of which is not affected by our being able or unable everywhere to trace it in the history. *Into* (not merely *to* or *towards*, which would be otherwise expressed) *the*

*borders*, a compounded form of the word used twice in v. 31 below, and not applied like it to all contained within the bounds, but to the bounds themselves, in which specific sense it is employed by Xenophon, Thucydides, and Plato, who speaks of the bounds (or limits) of the philosopher and politician. The Greek word is properly an adjective, and means bordering or frontier parts (Matt. 15, 21.) *Tyre and Sidon*, the two great seaports of Phenicia, put for the whole country, which apart from them had no importance. (See above, on 3, 8.) The whole phrase does not mean the region between Tyre and Sidon, but the boundary or frontier between Galilee and Phenicia. *Would* and *could*, as in so many other cases, are not mere auxiliary tenses, but distinct and independent verbs; *he wished* and *he was able*. The construction *he was willing to know no one* (i. e. to make no acquaintance or receive no visit), though grammatically possible, is not so natural or obvious as the common one, *he wished no one to know (him)*, or *to know (it)*, i. e. his arrival or his presence. *To be hid*, or lie concealed, the Greek verb being active in its form.

25. For a (certain) woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet.

The reason that he could not be concealed is now recorded. *For a woman, having heard of him*, i. e. of his arrival now, or of his miracles before; but even in the latter case, the other fact must be supplied. *Whose little daughter* (an affectionate diminutive, used also in 5, 23, above) *had an unclean spirit*, in the sense repeatedly explained already. (See above, on 1, 23. 3, 11. 30. 5, 2.) It appears from this case, that these demoniacal possessions were not confined to Jews, or to any age or sex. (See below, on 9, 17.) *Coming* (into the house where he was) and *falling at his feet*, the full phrase which occurs in a contracted form above (3, 11. 5, 33), the act denoting not religious adoration but importunate entreaty.

26. The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

The remarkable circumstance in this case, which in part accounts for its insertion in the history, is that the woman here described was a Gentile, not only by residence but by extraction. *A Greek*, not in the strict sense, but in the wider one arising from the Macedonian conquests, which diffused the Greek civilization through the whole of western Asia, so that in the later Jewish dialect, Greek was substantially synonymous with Gentile, even where the language was not actually spoken, as it may have been in this case. *A Syrophenician*, so called either in distinction from the *Libyophenicians* in Africa, or because Phenicia, as well as Palestine, belonged to the great Roman province of Syria. (See above, on 6, 14.) Both countries also had

been peopled by the sons of Canaan, so that this woman was at once a Greek, a Syrophenician, and a Canaanite (Matt. 15, 22.) *By nation*, race, extraction, birth. (Compare Acts 4, 36. 13, 26. 18, 2, 24. Phil. 3, 5.) *Asked*, in the secondary sense of *begged*, and therefore followed by *that*, and not by *whether*. (See above, on 1, 30, and compare Luke 4, 38.) *Cast forth the devil, or expel the demon*. (See above, on 1, 34. 39. 3, 15. 22. 6, 13.)

27. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled ; for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast (it) unto the dogs.

Another singularity of this case, which suggests a further reason for its being so minutely stated, is our Lord's refusal to perform the miracle, of which this is the first and only instance upon record. Even here, however, it was not an absolute and permanent refusal, but a relative and temporary one, designed to answer an important purpose, both in its occurrence and in the historical account of it. *Let*, or more emphatically, *let alone* (implying an untimely interference), suffer or permit, the same verb which we have already had in different applications. (See above, on 1, 18. 34. 2, 5. 4, 36. 7, 8. 12.) *Filled*, sated, satisfied, the same verb as in 6, 42, and there explained. *Meet*, i. e. suitable, becoming, handsome, which approaches nearest to the strict sense of the Greek word, namely, *fair* or *beautiful*, though commonly applied in Scripture to excellence or beauty of a moral kind. *To take*, not pleonastic, as it often is in vulgar English, but *to take away* from them and bestow it upon others. *The children's bread*, the bread intended and provided for them, and when actually given belonging to them. *Dogs*, a diminutive supposed by some to be contemptuous, like *whelps* or *puppies*, but by others an expression of affectionate familiarity, like *little daughter* (a Greek word of the same form) in v. 25. This question is connected with another, as to the sense in which dogs are mentioned here at all, whether simply in allusion to the wild gregarious oriental dog, regarded as an impure and ferocious beast, or to the classical and modern European notion of the dog as a domesticated animal, the humble companion and faithful friend of man. The objection to the former explanation is not only its revolting harshness, and the ease with which the same idea might have been expressed in a less unusual manner, but the obvious relation here supposed between the children and the dogs, as at and under the same table, and belonging as it were to the same household. John, it is true, uses dogs in the offensive sense first mentioned ; but his language is "without are dogs" (Rev. 22, 15), apparently referring to the homeless dogs which prowl through the streets of eastern cities (compare Ps. 22, 20. 5<sup>o</sup>, 6. Matt. 7, 6. Phil. 3, 2) ; but here the dogs are represented as within, and fed beneath their master's table. The beauty of our Saviour's figure would be therefore marred by understanding what he says of savage animals, without relation or attachment to mankind. *Cast*, throw away, a term implying waste of the material as well as some contempt of the recipi-

ent. Like most of our Lord's parables or illustrations from analogy, this exquisite similitude is drawn from the most familiar habits of domestic life, and still comes home to the experience of thousands.

28. And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord ; yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

There is no dispute as to the meaning of this admirable answer, which might almost be applauded for its wit, if Christ himself had not ascribed to it a higher merit, as an evidence of signal faith, combined with a humility no less remarkable. There is, however, some dispute as to its form, particularly that of the first clause, which some explain as a denial of what he had said, and others more correctly as a partial affirmation or assent, but followed by a partial contradiction, as in our translation. The best philological interpreters are now agreed that *yet* is not a correct version of the Greek phrase (*kai yap*), which can only mean agreeably to usage, *for* or *for even*. The meaning of the answer then will be, 'Yes, Lord (or Sir), it is true that it would not be becoming to deprive the children of their food, in order to supply the dogs ; for these are not to eat the children's bread, but the crumbs (or fragments) falling from the table.' The whole is therefore an assent to what our Lord had said, including his description of the Gentiles (Matt. 15, 24) as the dogs beneath the table, and a thankful consent to occupy that place and to partake of that inferior provision. *Of* (literally *from*) *the crumbs* is not here a partitive expression, as it sometimes is, but simply indicates the source from which the nourishment is drawn. The idea suggested by an ancient and adopted by a modern writer, that the word translated *crumbs* here means the pieces of bread which the ancients used as napkins, is not only a gratuitous refinement, but a needless variation from the usage of the word, which is a regular diminutive of one itself denoting a crumb, bit, or morsel, especially of bread. *Children* is also a diminutive, the same with that in 5, 39-41, and entirely distinct in form, though not in meaning, from the one here used in the preceding verse.

29. And he said unto her, For this saying, go thy way ; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

*For* (the sake of, on account of) *this word* (saying, speech, or answer), *go thy way* (i. e. in modern English, *go away*, depart), perhaps to be taken as an abbreviation of the full phrase, *go in peace* (or *into peace*) employed above in 5, 34, and there explained. (See also on 1, 44. 2, 11. 5, 19.) The merit of her answer was its faith (Matt. 15, 28), to which her whole request was granted instantaneously, the demon having actually left her child when these gracious words were uttered. Now as this faith was the gift of Christ himself, there could neither be surprise on his part, nor legal merit upon hers, but only a benignant recognition of his own work in her heart, which his discouraging reception of her prayer at first had served both to strengthen and illustrate,

and was therefore no more unkind than the similar processes continually going on in true believers, though of course unknown to the experience of those skeptical interpreters, who either sneer at this as cruel treatment of a distressed mother, or assume a real change of purpose wrought in Christ by her persistent importunity.

30. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

This is merely a distinct historical statement of the fact that she found the Saviour's declaration verified on reaching home, *the demon (actually) gone out and the daughter laid upon the bed*, or rather *thrown there* (as the Greek word strictly means) by the fiend at his departure, so that her mother found her just as he had left her. This removes all appearance of departure from the general rule previously laid down (see above, on 1, 31. 5, 43), and derived by induction from the history at large, that in cases of miraculous restoration there was no protracted convalescence, but an instantaneous return to ordinary occupations. Had this been a case of mere corporeal healing or resuscitation, the effect would probably have been the same as in the cases just referred to. But the miracle was here one of dispossession, and this was no doubt sudden and complete; for the bodily exhaustion which ensued was not a remnant of the previous disease, or even a transition from an abnormal to a normal state, but rather a decisive indication that the latter had been reinstated, as the preternatural excitement which accompanied possession, and was usually symptomatic of it (see above, on 5, 5), would not have allowed her to lie quietly upon her bed, the sight of which recumbent posture must have satisfied the mother instantly, not that her daughter was recovering, but that she was recovered, from her fearful preternatural disorder. In recording this most interesting miracle, Mark treats it as an instance of extraordinary faith, without making prominent its bearing on our Lord's relation to the Jews and Gentiles, which belongs therefore rather to the exposition of the parallel account in Matthew (15, 21-28.)

31. And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

*Again*, implying not a previous departure from the same place, but referring simply to his previous arrival, as we speak familiarly of going to a place and back again. *Departing*, literally *going out*, the opposite of *coming in* (v. 24.) *Coasts*, not in the restricted modern sense of shores or sea-coasts, but in the wide old English sense of bounds or borders, sometimes including all between them. (See above, on v. 24.) *Tyre and Sidon*, or as the Vatican and several other uncial copies read, *through Sidon*, thus describing him as going northward from Tyre through Sidon, a circuitous but not impossible direction in returning to Decapolis, and one which may have been suggested by prudential mo-

tives. But the reading, though adopted by the latest critics, is by no means certainly the true one. *For* (or *along*, Matt. 15, 29) *the sea of Galilee* (Tiberias, or Gennesaret, see above, on 1, 16. 2, 13. 3, 7. 4, 1. 39. 5, 1. 21. 6, 47), *through the midst* (along the middle) *of the coasts* (the same word as before, and in the same sense of boundaries or bounded territories, regions, districts) *of Decapolis* (or *Ten Towns*), a name which has occurred and been explained already. (See above, on 5, 20.)

32. And they bring unto him one that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

While sitting or reposing in the hills or highlands of this region (Matt. 15, 29), he performs a miracle recorded only in the book before us, although Matthew speaks of his return from Tyre and Sidon to the lake, and of his performing many miracles, among the rest making dumb (people) speak, of which we have here a single instance. *They*, indefinitely, meaning certain persons not distinguished or described more fully, but, as the connection naturally indicates, no doubt the people of the region first named, i. e. the Decapolis, where he had already wrought a signal miracle of dispossession (see above, on 5, 20.) From a part of it, the district of the Gadarenes (5, 1) our Lord had been requested by the people to withdraw (5, 17); but even they might now be willing to experience his healing power, much more the other dwellers in Decapolis, who had not joined in that request or shared in the injury which prompted it. *They bring*, not carry (see above, on 2, 3) but conduct, lead, introduce into his presence *a deaf (man) hardly speaking*, i. e. with difficulty, either an effect of his imperfect hearing, or more probably a separate infirmity arising from disorder or defect of the vocal organs (see below, upon the next verse.) The Greek adjective originally means obtuse or dull, and is applied both literally to a weapon (as by Homer), and metaphorically to the senses of speech and hearing, probably because they are so commonly diseased together, and because the original want of hearing necessarily produces that of speech. Besides some instances where both or either may be meant, there are also clear examples of each specific affliction, as in Matt. 9, 23 (*the dumb spake*), and in Matt. 11, 5 (*the deaf hear*), in both which places the original expression is the same. It is another proof of individuality in little things, that Mark uses this word only in the sense of *deaf*, infirmity of speech being otherwise expressed (see below, on v. 37. 9, 25.) Even in English, the terms *hardly* and *scarcely*, though promiscuously used, are not entirely synonymous, the former being positive, the latter negative; the latter meaning *almost not*, the former *with difficulty*, not without exertion. The epithet in this case being compounded with the positive particle does not mean that the man was nearly speechless, but that he could only speak with difficulty or with painful effort. *Beseech him*, as in 1, 40. 5, 10. 12. 17. 18. 23. 6, 56, *to put his hand* (that he would impose his hand) *upon him*, thus prescribing as a necessary

means what they had seen or heard of as employed in other cases. It was probably to check this disposition to regard as indispensable and constant what was optional and variable, and to indicate not only what was to be done but how he was to do it, that our Lord so often varied his external method, and that the evangelists so often specify these variations. Both these practices or habits are remarkably exemplified in this case (see below, upon the next verse.)

33. And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue.

*And taking (having taken) him away from the crowd,* whose presence, as being now a matter of course (see above, on v. 2), is only incidentally recorded. *Aside*, in private, to a separate place, the same expression that is used above in 4, 34. 6, 31. 32, though rendered by a different word in all four cases (*alone, apart, privately, aside.*) The reason for withdrawing in the present instance has been variously explained, as a desire to avoid ostentation or discourage superstition, and the like, none of which are either indicated in the context or appropriate to this case more than any other. In the absence of explicit information on the subject, no conjecture is more likely than that this proceeding was intended to defeat the expectations and to disconcert the groundless prepossessions of the people, who supposed that he could only work a miracle in one way, thereby limiting his power and perhaps ascribing an intrinsic virtue to external acts which were entirely arbitrary and at his discretion. Thus they probably expected him to heal the man in public and by simple imposition of his hand, whereas he chose to work the miracle in private or *away from the crowd*, and in the presence of a few spectators only, not by a simple touch but by a series of unusual acts, no more necessary here than elsewhere, but intended to convince them that he was not bound to any exclusive mode, and that he only used external acts at all in order to connect the miraculous effect even sensibly with his own person as the source from which the healing power proceeded (see above, on 5, 23. 28. 41.) This view of the matter, while it furnishes at least as satisfactory a ground as any other for our Lord's proceeding, supersedes the necessity of giving a specific sense to each of the successive acts which he performed on this occasion, and which some interpreters regard as means employed to strengthen the man's faith, or to meet some other exigency of his case, a far less likely supposition than the one already stated, that this *modus operandi* had no reference to the man himself, except as one of a great number whose mistaken notions were to be corrected and their groundless expectations disappointed. *Put*, a stronger word in Greek, which strictly means *threw or cast* (the same with that in vs. 27. 30), but may be rendered with less violation of our idiom and usage, *thrust*, as it is in John 20, 25. 27. *His (own) fingers into his (the deaf man's) ears*, as being the parts specially affected. *Spitting (having spit)*, not with any reference to an ancient notion as

to the medicinal virtue of saliva, but as an arbitrary act adapted to the purpose before mentioned. *Touched his tongue*, either with his hand, or with the spittle, probably the latter, as the two are brought into such close connection, and as a similar application is recorded elsewhere (see below, on 8, 23, and compare John 9, 6.) *The tongue was touched*, as the other diseased organ, these particular handlings being substituted for the simple contact usually practised.

34. And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

*And looking up* (or *having looked up*) *into* (not simply *to* or *towards*, see above, on v. 27, where the same preposition is employed, but actually looking as it were *into*) *the sky* (or *heaven*, see above, on 1, 10. 11. 4, 4. 32. 6, 41) as representing the abode of God. *He sighed* (or *groaned*), a natural expression of distress (see Rom. 8, 23. 2 Cor. 5, 2. 4. Heb. 13, 17) and sometimes of displeasure (James 5, 9), but also of intense desire and earnest supplication (Rom. 8, 26.) Hence some suppose it here to indicate a painful exercise of sympathy and pity for the sufferings of men, others importunate petition to the Father. But as Christ performed his cures in his own name and by his own authority, and as no reason can be given for extraordinary pity being either felt in this case or recorded, it is better to consider it as one of these external acts by which it pleased him to distinguish this from other miracles, because he saw a disposition to regard the usual routine as necessary either by divine appointment or intrinsic virtue. At the same time it may be conceded that the acts employed for this end were impressive in themselves and appropriate to the case in hand. *Ephphatha*, an Aramaic imperative, from a well-known Hebrew root, and differing very little from the corresponding Hebrew form, but still less from the Syriac and Chaldee. The address may be either to the sense or organ so long shut and useless, or to the man himself considered as shut up, or shut out from so much enjoyment shared by the meanest of his fellow creatures. We have here another instance of the Saviour's very words in his vernacular language, carefully preserved as vivid recollections of a witness and as sacred relics or memorials to others, but immediately followed by a Greek translation, making it intelligible to his Gentile readers (see above, on 5, 41. 6, 27. 7, 4.) The Greek verb used is an emphatic compound meaning to be opened through or thoroughly.

35. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

*Immediately*, omitted in the Vatican and other ancient copies, probably because the cure was thought to be a gradual and not an instantaneous one, a false conclusion from the series of acts mentioned in the verse preceding, which were not designed to indicate successive stages in the cure itself, but merely to diversify the outward antecedents of the one change which as usual was instantaneous. *Opened*, completely

thoroughly, the same intensive verb employed in the foregoing verse. *Ears*, literally, *hearings*, sometimes used in the passive sense of what is heard (see above, on 1, 28, and below, on 13, 7), sometimes to denote the very act of hearing (as in Matt. 13, 14), sometimes in the active sense of that which hears (as in Acts 17, 20. 2 Tim. 4, 3. 4, and here.) *String*, bond, any thing that binds or fastens, here used not in the strict sense of a physical ligament or ligature, but in the figurative sense of an impediment or stricture, as in Luke 13, 16, where the bond is one imposed by Satan. *Spake plain*, or rather *right, rightly*, as the same word is translated in Luke 7, 43. 10, 28. 20, 21, not correctly, as opposed to barbarous or vulgar elocution, but in a natural and normal manner, as opposed to the *mogiluly* or difficult utterance to which he had been subject.

36. And he charged them that they should tell no man ; but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published (it)—

*Charged*, admonished them distinctly, the verb used above in 5, 43, and there explained. Here, as there, the prohibition is to be referred to a divine discretion, by which the excessive zeal of those who witnessed the Redeemer's miracles was checked and chastened, although not entirely suppressed (see above, on 1, 45.) It is probably recorded only in those cases where a miracle was wrought in a place or among a people less familiar with such wonders, and the more prone therefore to extravagant activity in spreading them abroad. *Them* may either be indefinite and mean such as happened to be near him and to hear him, or denote more specifically those who brought the patient to be healed (v. 32), his friends and neighbours. *The more*, or rather, *as much as*, in the same proportion, which agrees with the version as to sense but not in form. *So much the more a great deal* corresponds to two Greek words meaning *more excessively* or *superabundantly* (see above, on 6, 51.) *Published*, heralded, proclaimed, the Greek verb commonly translated *preached* (see above, on 1, 4. 7. 14. 38. 39. 45. 3, 14. 6, 12.)

37. And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well ; he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.

The effect of this great miracle on those who witnessed it was so extraordinary that the writer has to coin a Greek word to express the boundlessness of their amazement. This is a superlative superlative, formed by prefixing a particle expressive of excess both in Greek and English (*hyper*) to an adverb expressive of the same idea, so as to mean not merely *more than abundantly*, but *more than superabundantly*, or *superexcessively*. The effect itself, produced in so excessive a degree, was that of wonder or amazement, here denoted by the same verb that was used above in 1, 22. 6, 2, and there explained. The oral

expression of this wonder is exemplified or summed up in a single sentence, which may or may not have been uttered totidem verbis, but on either supposition fairly represents the meaning and the form of what they did say. *He hath done all things well*, or restoring the original arrangement by inversion, *Well* (not merely in the moral sense of rightly, but in that of admirably, beautifully, nobly, see above, on v. 27) *all things* (i. e. all that we have seen him do at all, but with particular allusion to his miracles) *he hath done* (from the beginning to the present time), the proper import of the perfect tense as distinguished from the present in the last clause, which relates to what had just been done on this occasion. *Both the deaf he makes* (causes or enables) *to hear, and the dumb (or speechless) to speak*. The etymological relation of the last verb and adjective adds greatly to the point and force of the original. Both adjectives in Greek are plural, which may either be generic and refer to this one case, or be strictly construed as relating to the many miracles performed at this time, of which Mark records but one, while Matthew (15, 30.31) speaks in general not only of their number but their vast variety, including in his catalogue the very classes here particularly mentioned, and by both evangelists in plural form.



## CHAPTER VIII.

DEPARTING from his ordinary practice of detailing only select miracles, and those the most dissimilar, Mark here records a second instance in which Christ miraculously fed a multitude of people, for the very reason that the repetition of a wonder so stupendous entitled it to be again related (1-9.) This is followed by a new mode of attack or opposition on the part of the unfriendly Pharisees, by calling for a certain kind of miracle which they chose to make the test of his Messiahship, but one that he refused to furnish (10-13.) A remarkable mistake of the disciples serves to show their backwardness in learning under such a teacher, and affords an opportunity of further admonition and instruction (14-21.) A miracle is here preserved by Mark alone, distinguished from all others as a case of gradual or progressive restoration (22-26.) During a circuit in the north part of Perea, Jesus inquires into the opinions of his followers respecting him, and draws forth from the twelve a formal acknowledgment of his Messiahship (27-30.) He then imparts to them the new and painful doctrine of his passion, and rebukes Peter for resisting it (31-33.) This gives occasion to a public statement of the duty and necessity of self-denial, and the danger of denying Christ himself (34-38.) All these topics are connected by the twofold tie of chronological succession and of a natural association, proving afresh the methodical coherence and organic oneness of the composition. On the first three of these topics there is a parallel account in Mat-

thew; on the last three both in Luke and Matthew; while the fourth or central topic of the series is peculiar to this gospel. Of the six parallel accounts, the chronological arrangement is the same in both (or all) the gospels.

1. In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples (unto him) and saith unto them,

*In those days*, an indefinite expression, which may be applied to intervals of very different length, as will appear from a comparison of Mark 1, 9 with Matt. 3, 1. The most specific sense that can be put upon it here is that of the same period, or general division of the history, to which the previous narratives belong. It may however be defined by the ensuing words, *the crowd being very great* (literally, *all-great*), i. e. in those days when the concourse still continued undiminished, with or without reference to a subsequent decrease in the attendance. *And (they) not having any thing to eat* (or more exactly *what they might eat*), the absolute genitives stating the circumstances in which what is afterwards described took place. Instead of *very great* (or *all-great*), the latest critics, following the Vatican and other ancient copies, read *again great*, which defines this as a subsequent occasion of great concourse, similar to that described in 6, 33. 44. The charge of inconsistency between the two evangelists as to the date of this event proceeds upon the supposition, that Matthew (15, 32) represents it as occurring on the same day with the cures described in 15, 31, whereas he merely puts the two together without any note of time at all, by overlooking or concealing which fact most of the alleged disagreements in the gospels are created. *Jesus* (omitted by the latest editors, without effect upon the sense) *calling to (him) his disciples*, probably the twelve apostles, *says to them*, the graphic present so familiarly employed by this evangelist.

2. I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat.

*I have compassion*, I am moved (or yearn) with pity, the peculiar idiom explained above (on 1, 41. 6, 34.) The proposition is here made by Christ himself, as in John's account of the former miracle (John 6, 5), with which that of Mark (6, 35) is perfectly consistent. *Because already three days they continue with me*, or, according to the oldest copies, *three days now continue*, i. e. the third day is passing. The three days are probably to be computed in the Jewish manner, i. e. reckoning each portion as a whole day, so that three days do not necessarily include more than one whole day and portions of two others.

3. And if I send them away fasting to their own

houses, they will faint by the way; for divers of them came from far.

*Send them away*, dismiss, dissolve them (see above, on 6, 36), not as individuals merely, but as an assembly or a congregation, which implies that according to his custom he had taught as well as healed on this occasion. *Fasting*, hungry, without eating, without having eaten, a word found only in this passage and the parallel (Matt. 15, 32.) *To their own houses*, literally, *to their house*, i. e. their home, here spoken of collectively as one, which would not have been done if *house* had here its primary or proper meaning. The Greek phrase differs only in the added pronoun from the one employed in 2, 11. 7, 17, and there explained as meaning *home* or *homeward*. *They will faint*, or be relaxed, debilitated, literally *loosened out*, a kindred verb to that translated *send away*, but strictly meaning to *dissolve*. The reference is, therefore, not to fainting in the modern sense of swooning, but to weakness, occasioned by the want of food. *By the way*, in (or on) the way home. *Divers*, literally *some*, implying that the great mass came from the vicinity (see above, on 6, 44.) *Came*, or more correctly, *come*, or *have come*, which is not a comment of the historian, as the form of the verb shows, but a part of our Lord's own compassionate address to his disciples. The latest text has *and* instead of *for*, and *are* instead of *come*, both readings of the oldest extant manuscript (the Vatican), but neither altering the sense.

4. And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these (men) with bread here in the wilderness?

*Whence*, not merely *how*, but more specifically, from what source or quarter? *A man*, in the pronominal sense so common in our version (see above, on 1, 44. 4, 23. 5, 4. 7, 16), the Greek word being simply an indefinite pronoun meaning *any (one.)* *Can*, a distinct verb in the future tense, *shall* (or *will*) *be able*. *Satisfy*, i. e. in the physical corporeal sense of satiating, filling the stomach, appeasing the desire for food. (For the primary and secondary usage of the Greek verb, see above, on 6, 42.) *With bread*, literally, *of breads*, i. e. loaves (see above, on 2, 26. 6, 38.) *Here*, in the original, precedes the words *to fill with bread*, and *in*, or rather *on* (i. e. on the barren surface of) *a (not the) desert*, which would therefore seem to mean a barren waste, and not a mere uncultivated solitude (see above, on 6, 35.) The strangeness of the fact, that the disciples should have spoken thus after the first feeding of the multitude, though not to be denied, is not to be exaggerated. It is not said that they forgot the other miracle; but what right had they to expect its repetition, or what reason to believe that he would choose what was in some respects his most stupendous miracle to be repeated? Besides, the inconsideration of Christ's followers is always represented as extraordinary, almost preternatural, until they had received the Holy Spirit. And yet Moses

represents himself as guilty of the same oblivion or unbelief (see Num. 11, 21. 22, and compare Ps. 78, 19. 20); and Israel displayed it upon all occasions from the departure out of Egypt till the entrance into Canaan. Even those who now reject the statement as incredible would probably have done the same if similarly situated. Now that we know Christ's purpose to renew the miraculous provision, it is easy to exclaim at those who did not know it and had really no reason to expect it.

5. And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

The question is the same as in 6, 38, with the omission of the order, *go and see*. The number of loaves here is greater (*seven*) and the fishes are not mentioned, although Matthew (15, 34) speaks of them as few and small. These variations are exceedingly adverse to the hypothesis of one occurrence divided by tradition into two.

6. And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground, and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before (them), and they did set (them) before the people.

The order is the same as in 6, 39, but addressed directly to the crowd by Christ himself, though probably communicated to them by the twelve, as in the former case, a circumstance not mentioned in the narrative before us, which is naturally more concise, the writer's object being only to record the chief points of coincidence and difference between the cases. *On the earth* is substituted here for *on the grass* (6, 39), which might be regarded as substantially synonymous but for the expressions in v. 4 implying that this was a desert in the strict sense, i. e. wholly destitute of vegetation. Another circumstance omitted here in both accounts is the symmetrical arrangement of the multitude in companies or messes, which may either have been really dispensed with upon this occasion, or left to be supplied from the earlier narrative (6, 39. 40.) Another is the act of looking up to heaven (6, 41), while for that of blessing is here substituted that of giving thanks, unless both be considered as describing the same service, like the corresponding English phrase, to say grace. The usual and simple verb to *break* here takes the place of the emphatic compound used in 6, 41.

7. And they had a few small fishes, and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before (them.)

Here the *few small fishes* are for the first time mentioned to complete Mark's picture of the distribution. The second epithet is not expressed in Greek except by the diminutive form of the word *fishes*. It is not necessarily implied that they were separately blessed and di-

vided, although this would be the natural interpretation of the words if taken by themselves, which the sceptical interpreters insist upon in all such cases, instead of letting it be modified and explained by the parallel account, according to the method daily practised in our courts of justice.

S. So they did eat, and were filled, and they took up of the broken (meat) that was left seven baskets.

The eighth verse differs from the corresponding statement (6, 42) only in the strength of the expression, the universal term (*all*) being here omitted. In the next clause, instead of *twelve baskets full of fragments*, we have *remnants* (excesses, superfluities) of *fragments*, *seven baskets*. Besides the difference of construction and of number, the word for *baskets* is entirely different in both evangelists from that before used (6, 43); and this distinction is observed in our Saviour's subsequent allusions to these two great miracles (see below, on 8, 19.) The notion of some modern sceptics, that this difference betrays a difference of source or traditional authority, proceeds upon the monstrous supposition, that a writer capable of framing such a history as we have found this to be, could either ignorantly or deliberately introduce into his narrative, without the slightest intimation to the reader, two discordant statements of the same occurrence, with their variations both of form and substance, in a perfectly crude and unadjusted state. Such a postulate would not have been so long endured by Christian readers but for the unfortunate impression even among them, that the gospels are mere bundles of materials, out of which we are to frame a history, instead of being well-digested histories themselves. The consistent and uniform distinction made between the baskets makes it highly probable that different kinds were used upon the two occasions, though the difference itself may now be lost, as it certainly is wholly unimportant.

9. And they that had eaten were about four thousand, and he sent them away.

The latest critics have adopted here the reading of the oldest copy, which is very brief, *and they were about* (literally, *as*) *four thousand*, omitting *men* and *those eating*, which may possibly have been transferred by assimilation from 6, 44. It is worthy of remark that this second narrative, so far from being an exaggeration or embellishment of the first, not only makes the numbers fed absolutely smaller, but the ratio or proportion to the food provided, thus diminishing the miracle so far as mere quantity is concerned. On what supposition can this strange fact be accounted for, except the supposition of historical reality, the simple supposition that the two events occurred precisely as Mark here relates them? Had the two miracles been given each by one evangelist, there might have been some colour for the charge of two irreconcilable traditions; but as if to sweep away the very ground of such an allegation,

both are recorded both by Mark and Matthew, so that the points of difference, instead of serving to discredit either, only prove that the events themselves were altogether different. The points are indeed as many and as marked as they could well have been, supposing that the same essential miracle was twice performed. The time, place, numbers, and proportions are all different; and it is surely not to be regarded as surprising that the people in both instances were hungry, that the food provided was their ordinary diet, that they leaned or lay upon the ground, that Christ pronounced or asked a blessing on the food, and employed the twelve disciples in its distribution. For how could any of these circumstances vary if he did repeat the miracle? His reasons for repeating it are not revealed and need not be conjectured; but among them may have been the very feeling which now prompts the question. We have seen it already to be not improbable that some of the accompanying acts in other miracles were varied for the purpose of evincing his own liberty and absolute discretion, as distinguished from the uniform routine to which men would have tied him. May he not, for the same reason, have repeated in a less imposing form what they would rather have expected to see standing by itself in its unique sublimity, as something that could happen only once and was wholly *sui generis*? But this may be undue refinement, and it may be better simply to regard it as an instance of authoritative action, independent of our finite views of what is right or needful. That both these miracles have been recorded notwithstanding their resemblance, is explained by that which seems to call for explanation. It is no doubt the practice of the sacred writers to avoid the repetition of identical or nearly similar events; but in a case of such surprising repetition of the acts themselves, the very sameness was a reason for recording both.

10. And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

*Straightway*, as soon as he had sent away the multitude, implying an immediate chronological succession in this part of the narrative. *Entering* (embarking on, going on board) not *a ship* but *the ship* (or *the boat*), i. e. the one before mentioned as attending him (see above, on 3, 9. 4, 1-36. 5, 2. 18. 6, 32), in which he made his voyages from one point to another, and from which he sometimes taught the people. *The parts* (regions, neighbourhood) of *Dalmanutha*, a place otherwise unknown, but supposed to have been a village or small town near to Magdala (Matt. 15, 39), the site of which has been determined on the west shore of the lake, a few miles north of Tiberias.

11. And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.

*The Pharisees*, his prominent opponents, as the zealous adherents of the oral law or traditional theology, *came forth* from their houses, or

came forward from the multitude and took up a conspicuous position (see above, on 2, 6.) *Began*, at once, as soon as he arrived, implying also that they afterwards continued it. *To question with him*, a Greek verb originally signifying joint investigation, then discussion or dispute, particularly when conducted in the way of disputatious questioning, challenge, or demand. *Seeking from him*, or demanding of him, *a sign from heaven*, as distinguished from a sign on earth, such as his miracles of healing were, or a sign from hell, as they declared his dispossessions of the demons to be (see above, on 3, 22.) This demand may have been prompted by a real belief that the Messiah's advent was to be announced by strange celestial phenomena; or it may have been a mere subterfuge, a cavilling demand for more proof when they had enough already, an attempt to escape from the convincing power of his miracles on earth by demanding one from heaven. *Tempting him*, not in the ordinary sense of urging or enticing him to sin, but in the primary and wide sense of trying, putting to the proof, a process necessarily implying either doubt or unbelief of his pretensions. In this sense man is said to tempt God, who is incapable of tempting or being tempted in the other (James 1, 13.)

12. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why do this generation seek after a sign? Verily, I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

*Sighing* (or *groaning*) *deeply*, the qualifying term being not a separate Greek word but a particle prefixed to the verb and giving it intensive force, perhaps with the additional idea of its coming up from the depths of the heart, as this particle in composition often denotes upward motion (see above, on 6, 41. 7, 34.) This natural expression of profound grief is preserved by Mark alone, as are most of the few notices we have of our Saviour's looks and gestures, and for which perhaps we are indebted under God to the memory of Peter (see above, on 3, 5. 34.) The feeling here expressed is that of mingled grief and indignation at their obstinate and wicked unbelief (see above, on 6, 6.) *In his spirit*, not externally, with windy suspiration of forced breath, but inwardly, the groan or sigh proceeding from his very heart and indicating how it was affected (compare Acts 2, 37.) *Why*, i. e. with what right, or on what ground, since they thereby called in question the abundant attestations which he had already given of his divine legation. *This generation*, these contemporary Jews, the last and worst of their rebellious race, because they sinned against more light than any who had gone before them, and crowned all the sins of their fathers with the crying sin of denying and rejecting the Messiah whom they had been so long looking for. *Seek after*, another compound of the verb employed in the preceding verse, and signifying earnest search, importunate demand, or peremptory challenge. *A sign*, as in v. 11, a miraculous proof of his divine legation. *Verily (Amen)* here used at the beginning of a sentence as a solemn affirmation of its truth (see above, on 3

28. 6, 11.) *I say to you* is also an impressive attestation of the authority and weight of what is just about to be uttered. This twofold preparation for what follows indicates, not only its importance in itself, but its serious bearing on the interests of those whom it concerns. The form of the last clause is highly idiomatic, being that of a Hebrew oath, in which the first part (commonly suppressed) invokes the divine vengeance on the speaker if a certain thing is done (1 Sam. 3, 17. 24, 7. 2 Sam. 3, 35. 11, 11), so that the conditional expression is in fact the strongest kind of affirmation. *If a sign shall be given*, thus explained, is equivalent to saying, *no sign shall be given*, as expressed in the translation. *No sign*, i. e. no such sign as they demanded, no sign of their own choosing or prescribing.

13. And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

*And leaving them*, in Greek a strong expression, meaning more than locomotion or mere change of place, because from etymology and usage it suggests the idea of abandonment, letting them alone, leaving them to themselves, giving them up to hopeless unbelief (compare the previous uses of the same verb in this gospel, 1, 18. 31. 34. 2, 5. 3, 18. 4, 12. 36. 5, 19. 7, 8. 12. 27.) *Departed*, went away (from them) *into the other side* (of the lake), i. e. into the region of Perea. (See above, on 3, 8. 4. 35. 5, 1. 21. 6, 45.) This dialogue, recorded more fully by Matthew (16, 1-4), is sufficiently detailed to answer Mark's immediate purpose, that of marking another step in the progress of the systematic opposition to the Saviour. This consisted in a formal peremptory call for clearer evidence, and further attestation of his claim to be "a teacher come from God" (John 3, 2.) It was therefore a virtual though indirect and negative rejection of that claim, not by private individuals but by the party-leaders and the rulers of the nation (Matt. 16, 1), not on one occasion but repeatedly. (Matt. 12, 38. Luke 11, 16.)

14. Now (the disciples) had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

*Now*, in Greek simply *and*, connecting what follows with what goes before in the most intimate manner as a part of the same context. *Had forgotten*, a pluperfect form perhaps required by our idiom, but corresponding to a simple aorist in Greek, *they forgot* to take, or forgot themselves as to taking, a more expressive way of saying the same thing. *Bread*, in Greek the usual plural form distinguishing the separate cakes or loaves, and here denoting the usual provision for the company, especially when going on a journey. The remainder of the verse is very loosely rendered as to form, although the meaning is correctly given. *And except (literally, if not) one loaf, they had not with them (literally, with themselves) in the boat.* This particular statement is perfectly consistent with the general terms used by Matthew (16, 5), because

this one loaf was probably left over from a previous supply, and would not have prevented their laying in a fresh stock if they had not forgotten it. If this minute stroke, as is commonly supposed, is one of Peter's reminiscences, it serves with many others of the same kind, to show how much more vivid that apostle's recollections of minutiae were than those of Matthew, also an eye-witness.

15. And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and (of) the leaven of Herod.

By what would be a curious coincidence where mere men were exclusively concerned, our Lord begins, probably after they had thought of their neglect to carry bread and had begun to be solicitous about it, a parabolical discourse, in which he draws his illustration from the customary mode of making bread, i. e. with yeast or leaven. As this substance draws its useful quality from fermentation, and as this may be considered an incipient corruption, it affords a natural and striking emblem of the same thing in the moral world. Hence no doubt it was excluded from the sacrificial rites of the Mosaic law (Ex. 34, 25. Lev. 2, 11), and is employed so uniformly as a figure for depravity or depravation, that the only exception commonly admitted, the parable which Luke and Matthew join with that of the mustard seed (see above, on v. 31), is thought by some to be no exception at all, but the reverse or wrong side of the parable just mentioned, and designed to show the spreading tendency of evil no less than of good, not only in the world but even in the church of God. However this may be, a question which belongs to the interpretation of the other gospels, the parable of the leaven being omitted in the one before us, it is certain that our Lord here makes use of the emblem in a bad sense, when he tells his disciples to *beware of the leaven of the Pharisees*. *Beware of*, literally *look (or see) from*, i. e. as some explain it, *look away from* (or refuse to see) *the leaven of the Pharisees*. But it rather denotes just the opposite, to wit, the act of looking at it so as to avoid it. The preposition (*from*) is construed with the verb, not in its primary sense of seeing, looking, but in its secondary sense of looking out, taking care, being circumspect or cautious, of which sense we have had already at least one example. (See above, on 4, 24.) The verb being thus explained, the preposition indicates the object *from* which one is to escape by looking out, or against which he is to be guarded or upon his guard. The particular corruption to which Christ applies this figurative term is that of *the Pharisees and of Herod*, or according to Matthew (16, 6), that of *the Pharisees and Sadducees*. There are two explanations of this discrepancy commonly adopted, one by sceptical, the other by believing writers. The first treats Matthew's statement as at variance not only with Mark's but with itself, because it represents the two great hostile sects or parties as possessing one and the same leaven. The second, overlooking the latter objection, reconciles the gospels by assuming or concluding that Herod was a Sadducee, and is here named

as such by way of eminence. To this there is only a negative objection drawn from the silence of Josephus, or a positive one from his being rather represented by that writer as a Pharisee. Apart from this the conjecture is probable enough, since the Jews regarded all the Herods as half-heathen, not only on account of their Idumean origin, but also as the tools and vassals of a foreign power. This would of course make them odious to the Pharisees, the party who contended for all national distinctions and against the least assimilation to the heathen. But however plausible or doubtful this conjecture may be, it is not needed here to vindicate or reconcile the gospels, which may be accomplished in another and an easier way, by simply observing that the *leaven of the Pharisees*, against which the disciples are here warned, is nothing peculiar to or characteristic of them, but something common to them with the Sadducees and Herod, and all others who professed the true religion without really possessing it. Our Lord might therefore have connected all these names, and others too, without the slightest incongruity, because he is referring to the points in which they are alike and not the points in which they differ. What the point of contact and agreement was between these most dissimilar and hostile parties will be seen below (on v. 21.) In the mean time their conjunction by our Saviour may be likened to the language of a zealous preacher now, who should exhort his hearers to be careful that their piety was not that of a Papist, a Jew, or a Mahometan, but that of a true Christian. The sense of such an exhortation would be evident, but who would charge it with confounding inimical, nay opposite religions ?

16. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, (It is) because we have no bread.

*And they reasoned*, reckoned, or considered through and through, the same emphatic compound that is used above in 2, 6, 8, and there explained. *Among themselves*, not merely *in themselves* (Matt. 16, 7), that is, each within his own breast, but as the Greek expressly means, and should have been translated, *to (or with) each other*. This does not here imply dispute, but only earnest conversation and comparison of views, in which they seem to have agreed, since they are all represented as saying, i. e. in substance: (it is, or he says this) *because we have not bread*. This little circumstance, which none but a true history would have given, speaks volumes as to the simplicity and ignorance of Christ's disciples, even after they had been so long in contact with him, and had gone forth from him as apostles preaching and performing miracles. With respect to the error here recorded, however childish it may now seem, it becomes us to remember that many who deride such blunders as absurd, if not impossible, would probably have made the same if placed in the same situation, with their thoughts running upon bread, and a mysterious intimation from their master about leaven. Accustomed as they were to hear him speak in riddles on the plainest subjects, why might they not without absurdity suppose him to be doing so now ?

17. And when Jesus knew (it,) he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

But although not utterly irrational, and therefore not deserving our contempt, this error was still culpable and merited their Lord's rebuke. *When Jesus knew (it)* seems to imply that he afterwards discovered it, an idea not suggested by the Greek or by a close translation. *Jesus knowing*, i. e. on the spot and at the moment, what they said, and what they thought. *Why reason ye because ye have not bread?* i. e. why connect what I have just said with your want of bread, and try to give my words a meaning in relation to that trifling matter? It is not their want of perspicacity in seeing what he meant for which he blames them, but the undue anxiety about mere temporalities which occupied their minds, and made them thus incapable of knowing what he meant, or at least that he was talking upon higher subjects. *Do ye not yet perceive* the drift of my discourses, and the end to which my teachings are all tending? *Nor understand* or comprehend at least my general purpose? (For the usage of this last verb see above on 4, 12. 6, 52. 7, 14.) *Still hardened*, obtuse, stupid, *have ye* (or do ye hold or keep) *your heart*, i. e. your mind or soul.

18. Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

By a singular interchange of parts, Mark here takes Matthew's place as a recorder of prophetical quotations, which however is the less surprising since the latter had already given the same passage as cited on a different occasion (Matt. 13, 15.) Or perhaps the true view of the matter is that this is not so much a reference to the passage in Isaiah as to the proverb from which it derived its form, and which as we have seen was current among Greeks as well as Jews. As if he had said, 'Are you still so stupid as to be proverbially described as having eyes but not seeing, ears but not hearing?' (See above, on 4, 12.) But to them he adds another question which should be connected with the next verse.

19. When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. 20. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.

'If you have not strength of intellect sufficient to divine or comprehend my meaning, have you not at least some memory of what has passed so lately in your presence, before your eyes, and through your very hands?' This reproach, it will be seen at once, relates not so

much to their misapprehension of his words about the leaven, as to their extreme anxiety about the bread, which not only distracted and preoccupied their thoughts, but indicated want of faith in his capacity to help them and provide for them. Although he never performed miracles where ordinary means would answer the same purpose, they had surely no occasion to be troubled at the want of bread, when he had twice created it to feed not single individuals but thousands. Mark represents him as not merely asking them if they remembered these two signal miracles (Matt. 16, 9. 10), but forcing them to tell how many fragments they had taken up on each occasion. Upon this appeal to their own memory two things may be observed; first, as already hinted (see above, on v. 8), that the two kinds of baskets are distinguished here by both evangelists as in the narrative itself, so that the difference cannot be unmeaning or fortuitous; and secondly, that if the two accounts of the two miracles are merely two traditions of the same thing, then these words of Christ referring to them as distinct events must also be explained away. *When I brake* (implying distribution) *the five loaves among* (or to) *the five thousand*, i. e. the five and the five thousand, the four and the four thousand, now so memorable in my history and yours, but which you seem so strangely to have since forgotten.

21. And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?

*And he said to them,* Mark's favourite and characteristic formula, here giving prominence and bold relief to this concluding sentence as if separately uttered. *How is it that ye do not understand*, not my parables or enigmatical teachings till they are explained, but the design of my instructions, as relating not to bread but to religion, and the import of my miracles, as proving my capacity to feed you even by creating food, should that be needful. Had they duly considered what his miracles implied, they would not have had their minds engrossed by bread, or by the want of bread, when he was speaking, and would then have understood, if not precisely what he meant by leaven, yet at least that he did not mean the leaven used in making bread. This seems to be the natural connection of the thoughts, even in the narrative of Mark, who stops short at this laconic question, without any further reference to the meaning of the leaven. This shows that his design was not to elucidate that figure, but to illustrate the condition of the twelve at this important juncture. As the true sense of our Saviour's words, however, though belonging strictly to the exposition of the other Gospels, is highly interesting and important in itself, it may here be added that before the conversation ended, they had learned that by leaven he intended doctrine, not opinions or distinctive tenets, as to which the parties named could not have been described together, but their mode of teaching and expounding spiritual truth, which in all these cases was more or less external, superficial, ceremonial, and is therefore elsewhere called hypocrisy (Luke 12, 1.)

On the true sense of these two words, *doctrine* and *hypocrisy*, both which have already been explained (see above on 1, 22. 27. 4, 2. 7, 6), depends not only our Lord's meaning in this interesting passage, but the agreement of the several accounts.

22. And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

Mark here records a miracle not given in the other gospels, one of the very few passages entirely peculiar to his. His reason for inserting it cannot be merely that it followed the dialogue above recorded (vs. 14–21); for he often omits multitudes of miracles in writing of the periods to which they belong. So far as his design can be conjectured, it was probably to illustrate and exemplify still further our Lord's variety of method in the working of his cures, by stating a case (perhaps the only one) in which the cure was gradual. *He cometh*, or, according to the oldest manuscripts, *they come*, i. e. Jesus and his company, the twelve apostles and perhaps some others who attended him from place to place. *To (or into) Bethsaida*, or, as a few copies have it, *Bethany*, an obvious error of transcription, probably occasioned by the resemblance of the names, both which are compounded with the Hebrew *beth* (a house or place.) *Bethsaida* is supposed by some to be the town so called in Galilee, the birth-place of Andrew and Peter (John 1, 44); but the best interpreters and highest geographical authorities understand it of Bethsaida in Perea, on the north-east shore of the lake, in a solitude near which (or belonging to it) the five thousand were fed (see above, on 6, 31.) This Bethsaida was distinguished from the other by its Greek or Roman name, *Julias*, which it bore in honour of a daughter of Augustus. *They*, indefinitely, some men, certain persons, otherwise unknown; or more specifically, the man's relatives, friends, neighbours. *A blind (man)*, not one born blind (as in John 9, 1), for he knew the shape of trees (see below, on v. 24), but blinded by disease or accident. *Besought*, in Greek *beseech*, the graphic or descriptive present being still continued. *To touch him*, literally, *that he would* (or still more closely, *so that*, in order that, *he might*) *touch him*. These words in the original rather state the motive than the substance of the prayer, a nicety of form without effect upon the meaning, yet entitled to attention as an illustration of the difference of idiom. This specific prayer is not a sign of strong but rather of deficient or contracted faith, assuming contact to be necessary to the cure, an error which our Saviour did not think it necessary in the present instance either to reprove or correct (see above, on 7, 33.)

23. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw aught.

*And taking, laying hold upon, the hand of the blind (man), which*

is the order of the words in the original, although the construction in the version is grammatical and justified by usage ; the sense of course remains the same in either case. *He led him forth out (or outside) of the village*, a term applied with considerable latitude to towns of every size (see above, on 6, 36. 56.) *Out* is twice expressed in Greek, once by the compound verb, and once by the adverbial preposition ( $\epsilon\xi\omega.$ ) The reason of this movement has been variously conjectured (as in 7, 33) ; some supposing an intention to express displeasure towards the people of the town for reasons now unknown ; others a desire to be uninterrupted in the process which was more than commonly protracted. But these and other explanations, which need not be stated, assume that Mark intended to describe this and the following proceedings on our Lord's part as having a distinct significance, whereas he rather means to show how far he was from following a fixed routine, or countenancing the idea that a certain outward form was necessary to the curative effect. Against this error he provided by sometimes doing more, sometimes less, sometimes nothing, in the way of gesture or manipulation, and of all these methods we have instances recorded in the book before us. *Having spit on (or rather into) his eyes*, which some regard as a medicinal appliance, healing virtue being ascribed to the human saliva by Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny, and in various dicta of the Talmud. Others find a symbolical meaning in the transfer of something from the person of the healer to the person of the healed. But the necessity of these conjectures is precluded by the view of the matter just suggested. *And putting (laying or imposing) hands upon him*, as had been requested by his friends (v. 22.) *Asked; interrogated, questioned* (see above, on v. 5.) *If he saw* (literally, *sees*, another instance of the graphic present) *ought*, an old word, not yet wholly obsolete, for *any thing*. This pause, as it were, in the midst of the cure, to ask him as to its effect, is so unlike the usual immediate restoration, that it may be confidently reckoned as at least one reason for Mark's giving a detailed account of this case.

24. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees walking.

*And looking up*, raising his eyes, trying to use them. The particle with which the Greek verb is compounded sometimes denotes upward motion (see above, on v. 12), sometimes repetition. Hence the verb itself may either mean to *look up* or to *see again*, but the latter, though preferred by some interpreters, is a less natural anticipation of what follows in the next verse. The sensations of the blind man, on his first attempt to see again, are strangely but expressively described in his own language, the peculiarity of which, however, is exaggerated to the English reader by an equivocal construction, quite unknown to the original, and only partially removed by careful punctuation in the version. It is probably one of the most common and inveterate misapprehensions of a scriptural expression, that the participle *walking* here agrees with *trees*, and that the blind man intended to describe his

partially restored sight by saying that the men around him were like walking trees. But in Greek there is and can be no such ambiguity, the concord being there determined, not by the position of the words, which is far more free and discretionary than with us, but by their form or termination, which distinguishes their gender, and requires *walking* to agree with *men*, and *trees* to be taken by itself without any qualifying epithet. The word *men* also has the article which shows it to mean not men in general, but *the men* who were passing or at hand, perhaps the twelve apostles; for although he led him out of town, it is not said that they were unaccompanied, or that the place to which he brought him was a solitude. The meaning therefore of the clause, according to the common or received text, is, *I see the men walking about as trees*, i. e. undefined in form and figure. Except by their motions, which were those of men, he could not distinguish them from trees. It is remarkable however that the oldest manuscripts almost without exception have another reading, which appears to give the patient's words more fully. *I behold men because as trees I see (them) walking.* This is an awkward sentence, it is true, but not on that account less likely to have been pronounced on this occasion, while its very awkwardness may possibly have led to its abbreviation in the later copies. The weight of manuscript authority in favour of this reading is confirmed by its internal fitness, as a broken expression of surprise and joy, beginning with a sudden exclamation, *I see the men!* then qualifying or explaining it by adding, *because* (that is, at least), *as trees I see (them) walking.*

25. After that, he put (his) hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up; and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

*Then*, afterwards, or in the next place, a Greek particle often employed to separate the items in an enumeration, and intended here to mark distinctly the successive stages of the healing process, an effect secured still further by the word *again*, which is the next in the original though not in the translation. As if he had said, having gone thus far and partially restored the man's sight, he proceeded in the next place to impose his hands upon the eyes themselves, as he had previously done upon some other part, perhaps the head. It is possible indeed that even in the former instance he had laid his hands upon his eyes, but this is a less natural construction of the language, *spitting in his eyes and laying his hands on him*, where the mention of the eyes in one clause and of the person in the other, favours, though it may not peremptorily require, the former explanation. *Made him*, caused him, i. e. in this case both required and enabled him. *Look up*, or *see again*, the same two senses of the verb that are admissible in the verse preceding. If the latter be adopted here, the meaning of the phrase is, that he *caused him to receive his sight*; if the former, that he *caused him to look up*, or try to see, on which he found his sight restored completely. The only objection to the first construction is that the resto-

ration of his sight is then distinctly stated three times, whereas on the other supposition, it is only stated once, the other two expressions being then descriptive of the effort or experiment by which the patient was assured first of partial then of total restoration. He looked up once and saw men like trees ; he looked up again and saw them clearly. *Was restored to* (reinstated in) his sound or normal state, another term implying that he was not born blind. *Every (man), or all (things)*, as the Greek may be either masculine and singular, or neuter and plural. Another reading, found in some editions, removes the ambiguity by making it both masculine and plural, (*all men*), which may then be understood to mean specifically all those whom he saw before *as trees* (but) *walking*. *Clearly*, an expressive Greek word which originally means *farsightedly*, in opposition to near (or short) sight, although here, as in the classics, it may have the wider secondary sense expressed in the translation and opposed to the dimness of his sight when only partially recovered.

26. And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell (it) to any in the town.

*And he sent him away into his house* (or to his house), which was not in the town or village, as appears from the ensuing prohibition. The modern philologists deny that the Greek particle repeated here ( $\mu\eta\delta\epsilon \dots \mu\eta\delta\epsilon$ ) ever corresponds to *neither . . . nor* in English, as expressing an alternative originally present to the speaker's mind ; and one of them explains the first to mean *not even*, and the last *nor even*. 'Do not even go into the village, nor so much as speak to any (person) in the village.' The supposed inconsistency of these two precepts, or at least the superfluousness of the last, as he could not tell it in the town unless he went there, has produced no less than ten variations in the text of this clause, all intended to remove the incongruity, and therefore all to be rejected as mere glosses. This may serve to show by a remarkable example the extraordinary principle, on which the ancient copyists frequently proceeded, of deciding what the writer should have said, instead of simply telling what he did say. To this single error may be traced a large proportion of existing variations in the text of the New Testament, most of which happily have never become current, but are found exclusively in certain copies or at most in certain families or classes of manuscripts. This erroneous principle or practice is the more to be condemned as the necessity of emendation is in almost every case imaginary. In the one before us, for example, the supposed incongruity arises from the strict fidelity with which the very words of Christ (or their equivalents) are here reported just as he pronounced them, not in a rhetorical or rounded period, but in short successive clauses, the natural form of a peremptory order. The man having just been brought out of the town, though not residing there, would naturally think of going back to tell and show what had been done to him. But this our Lord, for reasons which have often been explained before, is determined to prevent by

pointed positive directions, which, without a change of meaning, may be paraphrased as follows: ‘Go home—go directly home—no, not into the town, but home—not even for an hour or a moment—do not go into the town at all—not even to tell what I have done—do not so much as speak to any person in the town—but go directly home.’

27. And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Cesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?

Here may be said to begin a new division of our Lord’s official history, in which he prepared the minds of his disciples for the great events before them by imparting clear views of his own mission as a sufferer. This necessary process of instruction he begins by ascertaining how far they already recognized and understood his claims as the Messiah. Of this interesting conversation we have three harmonious accounts, Luke (9, 18) here again becoming parallel with Mark and Matthew (16, 13.) Neither evangelist assigns the date of this transaction, even by connecting it expressly with the previous context as immediately successive. The natural presumption is, however, in the absence of all indications to the contrary, that these disclosures followed, and most probably without an interval of any length, the miracles and teachings which immediately precede them in the narrative. The place (not specified by Luke) is given both by Mark and Matthew as the region or territory (Matt. *parts*, Mark *villages*) of *Cesarea Philippi* (i. e. *Philip’s Cesarea*.) This was a city of Upper Galilee, near one source of the Jordan, as the ancient Dan or Laish (Josh. 19, 47. Judg. 18, 27–29) occupied the other. It was at the foot of Hermon and was called by the Greeks *Paneas*, a word still preserved by the local tradition as the name of a village (*Banias*) on the same site. To distinguish it from Cesarea on the sea-coast (*Cesarea of Palestine*, originally called *Straton’s Tower*), so often mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, it received the additional name *Philippi* (*Philip’s* or of *Philip*) from the tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis (Luke 3, 1), brother of Antipas and husband of Salome (see above, on 6, 22), by whom it had been rebuilt or beautified and named *Cesarea* in honour of Tiberius. Into the villages or towns dependent upon this important city Jesus came with his disciples, when or whence is not recorded. *Went out* throws no light on this point, as it may refer to any going forth for any purpose, even from a private house upon a journey, or from Capernaum as the centre of his operations on a new official circuit, or indeed from any place where they had been residing, whether for a long or short time. Most interpreters, however, inferring chronological succession from historical juxtaposition, understand this to have happened on a journey from Bethsaida Julias (see above, on v. 22) to Cesarea Philippi. As a sample of the mode in which the ablest Germans harmonize the gospels, it may here be mentioned that De Wette represents as a material variation between Mark

and Matthew, that the latter speaks of Jesus *having come* to the vicinity of Cesarea when he put this question, while the former says he asked it *in the way* (or *on the road*) to that place. Even if this were true, the usage of the participle aorist is wide enough to cover any discrepancy thence arising, *having come* and *coming* being almost convertible expressions. But the critic has himself fallen into the mistake which he imputes to the evangelist by not observing that *in the way* is mentioned after the arrival at Cesarea, and refers not to the journey from Bethsaida thither, but to his visitation of the villages or parts (Matt. 16, 11) dependent on the former town as a provincial capital. He came among those villages no doubt to exercise his ministry, and being in the way or on the road, i. e. travelling among them, for this purpose he asked or questioned his disciples in the words recorded in the last clause. This is one of the imaginary discrepancies which even some Christian writers represent as quite irreconcilable without the use of disingenuous harmonical contrivances. *Whom do men say* (or declare) *me to be?* i. e. in relation to his Messianic claims (Matt. 16, 13.) The question refers not to his enemies but to his disciples in the wide sense, the multitudes or masses who attended on his ministry (Luke 9, 18.)

28. And they answered, John the Baptist ; but some (say), Elias ; and others, One of the prophets.

Their answer brings to light the same diversity of judgment or conjecture before mentioned in the account of the effect produced on Herod by the miracles of Jesus (6, 14), but beginning with the notion there ascribed to Antipas himself, perhaps because it was maintained in such high places, or because it had also become dominant among the people. *Elias, Elijah* (see above, on 6, 15.) *One of the prophets*, i. e. of the ancient or Old Testament prophets (Luke 9, 19), either in the vague sense of *some one*, or as this sense of the numeral is denied by eminent interpreters, *a certain one*, perhaps Jeremiah (Matt. 16, 14.) It seems from this reply that notwithstanding the impression made by our Lord's miracles and teachings, and the convictions now and then expressed of his Messiahship, the great mass, even of those friendly to him, were disposed to look upon him rather as the Messiah's herald or forerunner than as the Messiah himself.

29. And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

In contradistinction from these popular impressions he demands of them, his personal attendants and more confidential followers, in what light they regarded him. As if he had said, 'these are the vague ideas of the multitude; but it is time to draw the line between them and yourselves by making a profession of your faith.' *But ye—whom do ye say* (or pronounce) *me to be?* Peter answers for the rest, not only

from his rash and forward disposition, but because he was in fact their spokesman, recognized as such both by his master and his brethren, and particularly fitted for the office by the very disposition just referred to. (See above, on 3, 16.) As Mark introduces this confession merely to complete the chain of incidents, he gives Peter's answer in the briefest form, containing only the essential proposition, *Thou art the Christ*, the Messiah, which are Greek and Hebrew synonymes, the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King of Israel (see above, on 1, 1), while Luke (9, 20) employs the more emphatic phrase, *the Christ of God*, and Matthew (16, 16) the still more descriptive one, *the Christ, the son of the living God*. The importance of this first express acknowledgment of Jesus as the Christ or the Messiah, even by his own chosen followers, arises from the fact that all his public actions hitherto implied a claim to that exalted character, and that in consequence the truth of this claim was essential to the proof not only of his public mission but of his personal veracity. The claim itself had reference to the clear prediction of a Great Deliverer in the ancient prophecies, expressly called Messiah, or Anointed, both by David (Ps. 2, 2) and by Daniel (9, 25), and by implication so described in all the scriptures which exhibit him as filling the great theocratical offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, in which the previous incumbents only held his place till he should come, and to which they were set apart by unction, the appointed symbol of those spiritual gifts which fitted men for these high functions, and which he was to possess without measure. All this Jesus claimed, and all this Peter acknowledged him to be, not only as a private individual when the truth was first suggested to him by his brother Andrew (John 1, 41), but now as it were *ex officio*, in the name of all the twelve, and in response to an authoritative question from the Lord himself.

30. And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

*And he charged them*, not the verb so rendered in 5, 43. 7, 36, but that employed in 3, 12, and there explained. Its original import is to estimate or value; then, with special reference to evil qualities or ill desert, to censure, blame, or disapprove; then to reprove or rebuke in word or deed; and lastly to command or to forbid on pain of such disapprobation, *That they should tell no man* (i. e. no one) *of him*, what they knew of him, particularly this which they had just confessed (Luke 9, 20), to wit, that he was the Messiah (Matt. 16, 20.) This prohibition is to be explained upon the same general principle with those addressed to evil spirits and to other persons whom he healed, not as an absolute suppression of the truth, but such a gradual disclosure as might best secure the great ends of his advent, and especially postpone the great catastrophe for which he came, till all intermediate ends had been accomplished.

31. And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders,

and (of) the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Having now drawn from them a profession of their faith in his Messiahship, he enters on the delicate and painful task of teaching them that although he was the Messiah and by necessary consequence a king, the manifestation of his royalty must be preceded not only by prophetic but by priestly functions, or in other words that he must suffer before he reigned (see Luke 24, 26.) This doctrine though distinctly taught by Daniel (9, 26) and Isaiah (53, 4-10), had been gradually lost among the Jews and was now confined to that small class who still looked for redemption in Jerusalem (Luke 2, 38.) The teaching even of the Scribes presented the Messiah as a conqueror and an earthly monarch, who was to restore the throne of David and Solomon and the long lost privileges of the chosen people. This delusion seems to have been shared by the apostles, so far as they had any views upon the subject, and of this he now, from this time (Matt. 16, 21) began (and afterwards continued) to disabuse them, by foretelling his various sufferings, his rejection not by individuals but by the nation, represented in the Sanhedrim by the three great classes here distinctly named, and lastly, his resuscitation after three days, i. e. on the third day after his decease.

32. And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him and began to rebuke him.

*And he spake the saying openly*, i. e. for the first time. He had taught all this by implication and by indirection, but he now disclosed it by explicit affirmation. We have here another indication that the point which we have reached is one of critical importance, a decisive juncture in the Gospel History or Life of Christ. The word translated *openly* is not in form an adverb but a noun, which according to its etymology and usage denotes freedom of speech, not only boldness as opposed to cowardly reserve, but frankness, as opposed to all concealment. It is here applied to Christ's explicit statement of his death and resurrection as not only an essential part, but the essential part, the essence, of his saving work, contrasted with the more obscure and enigmatical suggestion of the same truth hitherto. The effect upon Peter, though denounced by some as improbable and inconsistent with his previous confession, is one of the most natural and lifelike incidents recorded in the scriptures. Affectionate and ardent, but capricious and precipitate, imperfectly instructed even in the great truth which he had avowed in behalf of his brethren and himself, and no doubt elated above measure by the praise or rather blessing which the Lord had just bestowed upon him, although only in his representative capacity (Matt. 17, 19), he could not have betrayed his own infirmity in one act more completely than in that recorded here by Mark and Matthew (16, 22.) *Taking him to* (himself, or aside), as if to speak with him in private, not by the hand, which would be otherwise expressed.

With our habitual associations, it may not be easy to see any thing in this procedure but absurd and arrogant presumption, which has led some to reject it as incredible. But when we take into consideration all the circumstances just suggested, and transport ourselves into the midst of them, as Peter was surrounded by them, we may see that the extraordinary scene presented in this passage, although one which no fictitious writer would have dreamed of, and which could not be the fruit of any mythical process, is nevertheless exquisitely true to nature, both to that of man in general and to that of Peter in particular. *Began to rebuke (or chide him)*, as a friend entitled to such freedom, for indulging such unnecessary fears and gloomy apprehensions. *He began to do this in the words preserved by Matthew (16, 22), but was cut short by one of the severest answers ever uttered, which effectually taught him his mistake and brought him to his senses.*

33. But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan : for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

*But he* (the Son of Man, thus corrected and patronized by one of his own followers) *turning upon* (him), which appears to be the force of the emphatic compound here employed, *and looking at his* (other) *disciples*, or rather in the act of turning upon Peter *seeing the disciples*, who, as usual were following their master, and resolved to check the growth of such a spirit in the body, *he rebuked Peter* in his turn, thus retorting, throwing back to him, the censure which he had presumptuously cast upon his Lord and Master. *Get thee* (literally go, begone) *behind me*, out of my sight, away from me ! These words are not only the same in both accounts of this transaction, but identical with those pronounced by Christ to Satan in the wilderness, according to the common text of Luke (4, 8). and according to the latest text of Matthew (4, 10.) This coincidence affords a key to the true meaning of this sharp apostrophe, as not a mere expression of abhorrence or contempt, but a specific charge of imitating Satan as the tempter, and endeavouring to draw his master back from the very thing for which he came into the world, and for which his three years' ministry was but a preparation. As if he had said, 'What, is Satan come again to tempt me, as he did of old ? Avaunt thou adversary, get thee hence !' Then addressing the astonished and no doubt affrighted Peter, in his own person, he describes the cause of the mistake which he had just made. *Savourest*, an obscure English word, and expressing an idea not contained in the original, which means *thou mindest*, carest for, including both the thoughts and the affections. (Compare Rom. 8, 5. 1 Cor. 4, 6. Gal. 5, 10. Phil. 3, 19. Col. 3, 2.) *The things that be of God, &c.,* in the original is simply, *the (things) of God, the (things) of man*, i. e. their respective interests, affairs, or claims. The meaning of the sentence seems to be, 'you look only at the human side of these transac-

tions, and regard my death as a mere instance of mortality like that of other men, to be averted as a great calamity, whereas it is the means which God has chosen and appointed for the satisfaction of his broken law and the salvation of his elect people.'

34. And when he had called the people (unto him) with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

And having called the crowd to (him) with his disciples (who were previously near him), so that *also* is improperly supplied by the translators. Some affect to find a contradiction in this mention of a crowd, when he had previously been speaking privately to his disciples, and according to Luke (9, 18), praying with them by themselves. But this objection overlooks the fact, which we have had occasion more than once to mention, that the multitude was never very far off, even when our Lord was most retired; that his most confidential conversations with the twelve were held in sight though not in hearing of the people; and that nothing is more characteristic of his teaching than the way in which he used to turn in quick succession from a larger to a smaller or from a smaller to a larger circle. The reason of his doing so on this occasion is, that what he had to say was universally appropriate and binding, having reference to no official rights or duties, but to the very terms on which he would admit men to his service. The connection with what goes before is, that although the disciples were surprised to hear that he must suffer, they must now prepare to suffer too, the members with the head. *Whosoever* (without any exception or reserve) *will* (i. e. wishes or desires to) *come after* (i. e. follow) *me* (as my dependent and adherent), not in public station merely but among the humblest classes of my people. *Let him deny* (i. e. renounce, abjure) *himself* (as the great object of regard), *and let him take up his cross*, not merely a prospective or prophetic allusion to the mode of his own death, but a reference to the common practice of compelling malefactors to convey their own cross to the place of execution. Crucifixion being commonly regarded as at once the most painful and disgraceful way of dying, is here put for the worst form of suffering, and carrying the cross for humble, patient submission to it. *And let him follow me*, not merely in the general sense of service or the special sense of imitation, but in that of suffering with and like another. As if he had said, 'let him follow me to Golgotha.'

35. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

This requisition is so utterly repugnant to the natural love of life that it might seem like exhorting men to self-destruction. In reality

however it is only calling them to sacrifice a lesser for a greater good. *Lose* is a much stronger word in Greek and means *destroy*, the true antithesis to *save* in this connection. The form of the sentence is proverbial and, as in many other cases of the same kind, uses the same word in two senses, or rather in a higher and a lower application of the same sense. *Life* is the correct translation in both clauses, but the life referred to very different. *Whosoever will* (is willing, wishes to) *save his life* (i. e. his natural life, or the life of his body, for its own sake, as the highest good to be secured or sought) *will* (by that very act not only lose but) *destroy it*. He cannot perpetuate his life on earth, and by refusing to look higher, forfeits life in heaven. The converse is then stated as no less true and important. *Whosoever loses* or *destroys* (i. e. allows to be destroyed if needful) his life (in the lower sense before explained) for my sake (in my service and at my command), not only now while I am present upon earth, but even after my departure, for the sake of the gospel, the diffusion of the truth and the erection of my kingdom, *he shall save his life in losing it*, or only lose it in a lower sense to save it in the highest sense conceivable. The difficulty of distinguishing precisely between life and life in this extraordinary dictum only shows that the difference is rather of degree than kind, and instead of weakening strengthens the impression.

36. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ?

The loss in the case supposed is therefore no loss, as the gain in the other case is no gain. The terms are chosen from the dialect of ordinary secular business. *What will it profit a man*, what will he gain, on ordinary principles of value or exchange, *if he gain*, acquire, in the usual commercial sense, the whole world, that is, all that it can offer as an object of attraction or desire, the aggregate, sum total, of enjoyment, whether sensual, ambitious, intellectual, pecuniary, *and lose* (a most emphatic passive form, be made to lose, be injured, ruined, with respect to) *his own soul*, the word before translated life, but here denoting rather that which lives, enjoys and suffers. What are enjoyments if there is no one to enjoy them, if the man himself is lost, i. e. lost to happiness forever ?

37. Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?

He pursues the awful supposition further, to the verge of paradox and contradiction, but with terrible advantage to the force of this transcendent argument. Suppose a man to lose his soul, his life, himself, in the sense before explained, how shall he recover it, redeem it, buy it back again, by giving an equivalent in value ? There is something unspeakably impressive in this method of suggesting the importance of eternal interests, by supposing the very life or soul itself to be lost to the possessor and an effort made to buy it back, and then pro-

pounding the question, where is the equivalent, or how shall it be rendered? It is true that when the soul, or its eternal life, is lost, there is no one to attempt its restoration, for the subject or possessor is lost with it. But this is only stating in another form the very truth which Christ is here propounding, that a man may lose his present life and yet live on and have a better life in lieu of it; but when he loses his eternal life, he is himself lost, lost forever, and the thought of compensation or recovery involves a contradiction.

38. Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

*Therefore* seems to introduce an inference or consequence from what had just been said; but this is neither the true version nor the true connection. *For* assigns the reason of something previously mentioned or suggested, which is here a thought to be supplied from the preceding context, although not expressed, to wit, that this appalling disproportion of loss and gain, far from being a chimera or a vain imagination, was one which all the hearers of our Lord were liable to realize or verify in their own experience. *For whosoever* (without any distinction as to class or person) *shall be* (or rather *is*, referring not to future cases merely but including them) *ashamed of me* (i. e. unwilling from regard to men's opinions and authority to own me as his Lord and master) *and my words* (doctrines, precepts, and discourses, as his own belief, as true and certain), *also the Son of Man* (he who now appears in the form of a servant, and of whom on that account he is ashamed) *will be ashamed of him* (i. e. will treat him in like manner, will disown, reject him) *when he comes in glory* (with a majesty the opposite of what you now behold, not his own glory merely but) *the glory of his Father with the holy angels* (as distinguished from the fallen) whose reflected glory will enhance that from which it is derived (Luke 9, 26.) In other words, the day is coming when our relative positions are to be reversed, when the glory will be mine and the shame theirs who once despised me; when the question will no longer be whether they shall be ashamed of me, but whether I will be ashamed of them.

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## CHAPTER IX.

AFTER a sentence which belongs to the preceding context (1), Mark continues his account of the way in which our Lord prepared his followers for the great catastrophe now drawing near. Having announced his death and resurrection, with a solemn warning against certain fatal

errors, he encourages and animates three of their number by a momentary glimpse of the glory in reserve for him, to which they are admitted as witnesses from the earth, as Moses and Elijah are from heaven (2-8.) This Transfiguration, which may be regarded as the culminating point of Christ's prophetic ministry on earth, affords occasion for an important conversation on the predicted advent of Elijah (9-13.) On their return from this stupendous spectacle, our Lord performs a miracle which Mark records, not merely on account of its intrinsic greatness, but because the nine apostles, in the absence of their master, had in vain endeavoured to expel the demon, which affords occasion for some new and extraordinary teachings (14-20.) This failure, at a time when they were soon to be deprived of his visible presence and assistance, naturally leads him to predict anew that great event, but with no immediate effect except to frighten and perplex them (30-32.) That their mental state was still a darkened and debased one, the historian now further shows by the humiliating record of their strife for the pre-eminence, and of their master's tenderness and wisdom in appeasing it (33-37.) In the same conversation, he instructs them as to the relation borne to him and them by other true believers, and the danger of offending such (38-42.) By a natural and obvious association, he expands this warning into one against all causes of temptation or offence, which he winds up with an enigmatical but solemn exhortation first to purity and then to peace (43-50.) This synopsis of the chapter will suffice to show that its topics are not thrown together at random, or as desultory anecdotes and reminiscences, but linked by a natural association, which in this case, as in many others, by a happy concurrence, is both logical and chronological ; that is to say, by simply following the order of events, the writer accomplishes his main design of characterizing Christ's peculiar method of preparing his disciples for approaching changes. As compared with the parallel accounts, Mark's narrative is here distinguished by its usual vividness and fulness of detail, and by the striking but harmonious contrast in which he exhibits our Lord's goodness and severity, especially the sternness of his warnings against all unnecessary rigour on the part of his disciples.

1. And he said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

It is a curious instance of the careless or arbitrary way in which the text has been divided (see the Introduction), that this verse, which is the conclusion of the previous discourse and in Matthew ends a chapter (16, 28), here begins one, while in Luke it is almost exactly in the middle (9, 27), though in all three cases the connection is identical. The verse itself is one of the most difficult and disputed in the whole book, though the question is rather one of application than essential meaning. *Amen, verily, assuredly* (see above, on 3, 28. 6, 11. 8, 12),

*I say unto you*, with emphasis on both the pronouns, *I* (the Son of Man) *to you* (my confidential followers.) *There be*, not a subjunctive but an old indicative form equivalent precisely to the modern *are*. *Some of those here standing*, i. e. of the twelve then present and immediately addressed, or of the crowd referred to in 8, 34. *Which*, applied in old English both to things and persons, but confined to the former in modern usage, which would here require *who*. *Shall not*, a peculiarly strong negative in Greek, the aorist subjunctive with the particle ( $\mu\nu\eta$ ) suggesting the idea, that they neither could, would, nor should do what the verb expresses. *Taste of death*, i. e. experience or partake of it, considered as a portion or a draught administered by God to man (see below, on 10, 38. 14, 36.) Though the form of expression here is highly metaphorical, it can be referred to nothing but the literal decease of persons actually present. This restricts the meaning of what follows to a single generation or a single life-time, though it may have been a long one. *Till they have seen* (or *see*, behold, or witness) *the kingdom of God*, i. e. of the Messiah as a divine person, or at least as a divine commissioner and representative. (See above, on 1, 14. 15. 4, 11. 26. 30.) *Come*, not, as the English words may seem to mean, in the act of coming (till they see it come), but actually or already come, the only sense that can be put upon the perfect participle here employed. The idea that they should see it coming, i. e. when or as it came, is rather excluded, in accordance with our Lord's words elsewhere (Luke 17, 20), and not at variance with the present participle here employed by Matthew (16, 28), which relates not to the kingdom but to Christ himself. *In power*, an expression here preserved by Mark alone, i. e. with accompanying manifestation of omnipotent authority. The essential meaning, as to which there can be no dispute, is that before all then present should be dead, there would be some convincing proof that the Messiah's kingdom had been actually set up, as predicted by the prophets and by Christ himself. The only doubt or difference of opinion is in reference to the nature of this evidence, or the particular event by which it was to be afforded. The solutions of this question which have been proposed are objectionable, chiefly because too exclusive and restrictive of the promise to a single point of time, whereas it really has reference to a gradual or progressive change, the institution of Christ's kingdom in the hearts of men and in society at large, of which protracted process the two salient points are the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and the destruction of Jerusalem more than a quarter of a century later, between which points, as those of its inception and its consummation, lies the lingering death of the Mosaic dispensation, and the gradual erection of Messiah's kingdom.

2. And after six days, Jesus taketh (with him) Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves; and he was transfigured before them.

The preceding verse, although unduly severed from its previous context, is really in place here, as a transition or a link of connection between Christ's remarkable discourse as to his coming, and the history of his transfiguration. The critical character of this occurrence, and the rapid progress of events succeeding it, are here apparent on the surface of the narrative. After the solemn recognition of our Lord by his disciples as the true Messiah (8, 29), and the solemn announcement that he was to suffer in that character (8, 31), something further of the same kind might almost have been expected *a priori*, i. e. some extraordinary manifestation of our Lord as the Messiah, if not to the multitude, at least to his disciples, or if not to all these, to the twelve apostles, or if not to all these, to a chosen few, who were admitted to a more intimate and confidential intercourse. Such a disclosure would in some sense correspond to the manifestations and solemn recognitions in his infancy, preserved by Luke (2, 25-32. 38) and Matthew (2, 1. 11), but not included in the scope of Mark's biography (see above, on 1, 1.) In accordance with this antecedent probability, we find such a manifestation here recorded by the three evangelists, with more precision as to time than place. The apparent disagreement between the *eight days* of Luke (9, 28) and the *six days* of Mark and Matthew (17, 1), may be reconciled in either of two ways; first, by understanding one or both expressions as an idiomatic designation of a week, corresponding to the French and German use of *eight* and *fifteen days* to signify a week and fortnight, an idiom of which there is a clear trace in the English phrase, *an eight days* (Luke 9, 28), meaning not merely so many detached days, but a definite and well-known period. The other solution is that neither of the numbers is exclusive of the other, since *eight days*, even in the strict sense, would be *after six days*, and *six days*, in the strict sense, might be popularly spoken of as *about* (or *almost*) *eight days*. Either of these solutions is more natural and simple than the silly supposition of a glaring contradiction, unobserved by ancient readers, whether friends or foes, and handed down without correction or detection for a course of ages, to be finally discovered by the microscopic criticism of some modern sceptical interpreter. In all such cases, we should look not only at the difficulties charged upon the narrative itself, but also upon those by which the supposition of a blunder or a discrepancy is encumbered. *Takes*, the same verb used by all the three evangelists, and strictly meaning *takes along*, or with him, as companions or associates (see above, on 4, 36. 5, 40.) *Peter, James, and John*, his brother (Matt. 17, 1), who formed a sort of inner circle even within the sphere of the apostleship. They were among our Saviour's first acquaintances after his public appearance, among the first called to his special service, all Galileans and all fishermen, the same three who were admitted to the house of Jairus (see above, on 5, 37), and who afterwards were with him in Gethsemane (see below, on 14, 33.) This distinguishing honour, by elating them unduly, may have led to the ambitious errors into which they jointly or severally fell (see below, on 10, 35.) But this, though certainly foreseen, did not deter our Lord from making use of them in this way, any more

than his perfect knowledge of Iscariot prevented his admission for a time into the apostolic body. Indeed it is characteristic of the sacred history, from Genesis to Acts, that its object is to glorify not man but God, by showing his sovereign independence in the choice of his own instruments, and even in the case of the most honoured, such as Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Hezekiah, and Josiah, lifting the veil from their infirmities and showing how their very sins were overruled by God for the promotion of his own ends, without any imputation on his holiness or the least extenuation of their guilt, which was commonly attended by unquestionable providential retributions. *Leadeth*, brings, conducts, *into a high mountain*, which agreeably to usage (see above, on 3, 13, 5, 11, 6, 46), might be understood to mean the highlands as distinguished from the plains of the interior or the sea-coast, but is here most generally understood to mean a particular eminence or mountain in the proper sense, which seems indeed to be required by the indefinite expression, *a high mountain*, not *the mountain*, as in the places just referred to. The mountain is not named or otherwise described, and is therefore now unknown. Ecclesiastical tradition has identified it with Mount Tabor (Josh. 19, 22. Judg. 4, 6, 8, 18. Ps. 89, 13. Jer. 46, 18. Hos. 5, 1), as the highest peak in Galilee, while some modern writers place it in the neighbourhood of Cesarea Philippi, the last locality previously mentioned (8, 27.) But it is not likely that the intervening six or eight days were all spent at one place, and if not, a whole week's travel might have carried him entirely away from that vicinity. The precise place therefore must be left unsettled, though the local tradition, when intrinsically credible, and not contravened from any other quarter, may be rested in as giving more precision to the narrative. *Apart*, in private, by themselves (as in 6, 31, 32, 7, 33, above), which expression is then made still stronger by the added word, *alone*, as if to intimate that this was not one of the many instances in which our Lord was only partially secluded, with a multitude in sight or near at hand, but one of literal seclusion from all company except that of the three apostles. *Transfigured*, transformed, a Greek verb only found in later writers, such as Arrian and Athenaeus. The cognate noun (*metamorphosis*) is used in the title of Ovid's famous poem, where it means a literal (though not a real) change of shape. As the primitive noun, however, is employed by the best Greek writers, not merely in the sense of shape or figure, but in that of general appearance, the verb may be so taken in the case before us, i. e. as denoting not a change of person, such as to destroy his visible identity, but merely a transcendent dignity and splendour, as described more fully in the next verse. *Before them*, properly, in front of them, and then by necessary implication, in their sight, implying that they saw, not only the effect, but the process which produced it, so that there was no room for illusion or mistake. It is also suggested by this phrase that they were not chance-witnesses of this great spectacle, but taken with him for the purpose; that he went up to the mountain-top, not only to be there *transfigured*, but to be transfigured *before them*. Luke, to whom we chiefly owe the notices which we possess of our Lord's

devotional habits (see Luke 3, 21. 5, 16. 6, 12. 9, 18. 28. 11, 1), adds here the interesting fact that he was praying when this change took place, as he was praying when the previous attestation came from heaven at his baptism, as recorded by the same evangelist.

3. And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them.

This verse describes the metamorphosis or transfiguration, as it appeared to the disciples. Mark confines his formal description to the garments, without expressly mentioning the change in his countenance spoken of by Matthew (17, 2) and Luke (9, 29), which, however, is included in the general idea of effulgence overspreading and surrounding the whole person. It is very remarkable, indeed, that these descriptions should be all so strong, so various, yet so harmonious, as if each of the eye-witnesses had furnished an account of his own impressions of the same glorious object at the same eventful moment. *Raiment*, in Greek a plural form corresponding to our *clothes*, but in the singular denoting the outer garment of the oriental dress (see above, on 5, 28.) *Became*, the true sense of the Greek verb, which is often confounded with the verb *to be*. *Shining*, a still more expressive term in the original, applied by Homer to the glistening of polished surfaces and to the glittering of arms, by Aristotle to the twinkling of the stars, and by Euripides to the flashing of lightning, which last idea Luke (9, 29) expresses by a different verb. *White exceedingly as snow*, a poetical expression, even in its form, and even in translation, when the order of the words is left unchanged. The comparative phrase (*as snow*) is not found, however, in the Vatican and several other very ancient manuscripts, though some of the same class contain it. The word translated *white* means originally clear and bright, as applied by Homer to pure water, the sense of colour being secondary and indefinite, comprehending a variety of shades from gray to pure white. Here the word no doubt expresses more than the mere neutral sense of whiteness, namely, that of an effulgent white light without shade or spot; but that the notion of colour was meant to be conveyed at the same time, is clear from the comparison that follows. *So as* (or, retaining the strict sense of the original, *such as*, i. e. such garments as) *a fuller*, i. e. any fuller, cloth-dresser, literally, carder, one who cleansed woollen cloth by carding or combing it. *On the earth* may either be a strong universal expression, meaning in the world, in the universe, in existence, or contain a more specific reference to the heavenly source from which alone such brightness could proceed. *Cannot*, is not able, *to white* (or *whiten*, i. e. to produce such whiteness); the addition of the pronoun (*them*) is not only needless but enfeebling by gratuitous restriction of the meaning. What is said is not merely that no fuller upon earth could whiten *those clothes* so, but that no one could produce such whiteness. This comparison, though drawn from a familiar process of a homely art (see above, on 3, 21), is intelligible and expressive, especially if we suppose it to include the operation of bleaching, which was

probably performed by the same persons. It was no doubt the analogy which came into the mind of Peter, as he gazed upon his master's vesture, and was afterwards employed by him in telling what he saw, when at liberty to do so (see below, on v. 9, and compare 2 Pet. 1, 16-18.)

4. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses and they were talking with Jesus.

Besides this dazzling change in Christ's appearance, the disciples were permitted to behold what might be called a glorious apparition, did not the usage of that term necessarily suggest the idea of something unreal, an appearance without substance; whereas the one here mentioned is described as no less real than that of the disciples or their master. *Elias*, the Greek name of *Elijah* (see above, on 6, 15. 8, 28.) The form of expression used by Mark here is unusual and different from that of both the others, though it may not be easy to define the difference of meaning. While Matthew (17, 8) says that *Moses and Elijah appeared to them* (or *were seen by* them, in the plural number), and Luke (9, 30) merely amplifies the same expression, Mark differs both in order and construction. *There appeared to* (or *was seen by*) them *Elias with Moses*. Elijah is not only first named, and alone connected with the verb, but is said to have had Moses with him, which at least appears to give the former the precedence. There are two ways of explaining this remarkable expression, each of which may commend itself to some minds as entitled to the preference. The first is by regarding the whole clause as an exact description of the original impression made upon the mind of Peter, and supposing that he saw Elijah first and Moses afterwards, though equally conspicuous in all that followed. The other explanation is that Elijah was really more prominent in this majestic scene than Moses, not as his superior either in person or in office, but as nearer to our Lord in the prophetic succession, and expressly predicted at the close of the Old Testament as his forerunner (see above, on 1, 2.) Another possible but less intelligible difference between them is that Moses was buried (Deut. 34, 6) and Elijah translated (2 Kings 2, 11), unless the former statement be regarded as a figure for translation also, or the latter as a figure for triumphant death, neither of which impressions would be naturally made on any unsophisticated reader. Whether Moses, therefore, was provided with a temporary or apparent body, like the angels who descended to the earth in patriarchal times; or whether, by an anticipation of the final resurrection, he was clothed already with the body which he is to wear forever; there is still a difference between his case and that of Elijah, who had never died, but now appeared in the same body as of old, however changed and glorified (Luke 9, 31.) The reappearance of these two men, on a mountain-top, in such society, before such witnesses, and at such a crisis in the history of redemption, even if it were a fiction, would be one of the sublimest upon record, and astonishing indeed as the original conception of illiterate enthusiasts, who have nowhere else

exhibited either the power or the disposition to indulge in such creations, and who certainly have nowhere else presented any counterpart to this transcendent scene. But besides the grandeur of the whole conception, there is a singular minute propriety about it, no less indicative of skill (if an invention) than the general idea is of genius, in selecting just these two, the founder of the ceremonial law and the theocracy, on one hand; on the other, its restorer in the kingdom of the ten tribes in the days of its apostasy, who also was to re-appear before its final abrogation at the advent of the Messiah. This historical position of the two men gives them a priority, not otherwise belonging to them, over all the other prophets of the old economy, even such illustrious names as those of Samuel, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel not excepted. It can hardly be regarded as a separate reason for this choice, but is rather a symbolical premonition of it in the history, that even in externals these three persons had partaken of the same experience, as for instance in the singular coincidence that all of them had fasted forty days and forty nights in the wilderness (see above, on 1, 13, and compare Ex. 24, 18. 1 Kings 19, 8.) But their interview, as here described, was not a silent one. *And they* (Moses and Elijah) *were talking with him*, not merely *talked*, or *did talk*, but *were talking*, i. e. when the disciples first beheld them, or as long as they continued visible. The subject of their conversation might almost have been conjectured, as prospective rather than historical, as relating not to Moses and Elias but to Jesus, or to them only as his types and his forerunners. But it might have been less easy to determine a priori the specific theme of their discourse if Luke (9, 31) had not expressed it in a single word, his *EXODUS*, the exit or departure which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem, and which had in a certain sense been typified ages before by the exodes of the two men who now stood again upon the earth and talked with him, the exode of Moses at the head of Israel from the land of Egypt (Ex. 12, 41), and the exode of Elijah from the head of Elisha (2 Kings 2, 3), with "a chariot of fire and horses of fire," "by a whirlwind into heaven" (2 Kings 2, 11.) Surely such a combination of sublime historical associations must be either the creation of transcendent genius, or the faithful record of supernatural but actual occurrences.

5. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

The effect of this august and awful scene, which seemed to bring together and embody the beginning and the middle and the end of history, on the three disciples who had been selected as its earthly witnesses, is at the same time natural and preternatural. The spokesman, even here, is Peter, who sustains of course the same relation to his two companions that he did to the whole body when assembled (see above, on 3, 16.) *And answering*, not a mere unmeaning pleonasm, which would be sadly out of place in such a narrative as this, but a

most significant expression, serving to connect what follows with what goes before. *Responding*, not to any thing addressed directly to himself or his companions, but to all that he had heard of that celestial conversation, or to the whole unearthly scene as vocal to his spiritual senses. *He says to Jesus*, a particular preserved in all the narratives, and therefore probably implying some expressive look or gesture unequivocally pointing out the object of address, as being at once the most exalted and the most familiar. *Rabbi*, not the honorary title of a Jewish scribe or doctor of the law, as some absurdly fancy, but the same expression that is here preserved by Luke (9, 33) and Matthew (17, 4) only in its native Aramaic form, which Mark delights to treasure up whenever Peter's recollection or some other source had happily preserved it (see above, on 5, 41, 7, 11.) It is one of the most striking and instructive instances of the sameness in variety, by which the gospels are distinguished, that while all three evangelists agree verbatim in the words addressed to Christ by Peter, they all differ in the title prefixed to it, and that not at random or as if by chance but characteristically, i. e. in accordance with their usage elsewhere; for while Matthew has the ordinary Hellenistic term for Lord or Master (*κύριος*), and Luke a more elegant and classic synomyme denoting any overseer or prefect (*επιστάτας*), Mark has preserved to us the very word originally uttered (*פָּאַבְּשִׁי*), and of which the others are mere Greek translations, but which Mark himself does not think it necessary to interpret, because so familiar even to the Gentiles and still more to every Jew, whether Hellenist or Hebrew, who would instantly recognize it both as a formula in common use and as an uncorrupted sample of the sacred language (*תְּבִזֵּבֶן*). *Good* (i. e. in every sense, both natural and moral, right and happy, useful and agreeable) *is it* (for) *us here to be*, the order in which all the evangelists record this speech of Peter, which could never have been feigned by a fictitious writer, but demonstrates its own genuineness by being at the same time so natural and so unusual. The feeling expressed is that of perfect satisfaction and reluctance to go elsewhere, mingled with a vague recollection that they were upon a solitary mountain-top without the least accommodation or even shelter. It is this odd but natural confusion of habitual associations with extraordinary actual impressions that no forger would have thought of, and which therefore stamps the record as authentic. *Let us make three tabernacles*, i. e. tents, booths, sheds, or any other light and temporary shelter, as distinguished from a permanent and solid dwelling. Though the version *tabernacles* may be too restricted and awaken in the English reader only the idea of a sacred edifice, to which it is commonly applied in the Old Testament, it is not incorrect, as that idea would be unavoidably suggested even to an ancient reader from the corresponding use of the Greek word in the Septuagint version. Peter himself may have intended an allusion to the sacred tent of the Mosaic law or to the booths used at the Feast of Tabernacles; but the primary essential meaning was no doubt that of shelter and accommodation. That this was no selfish proposition is apparent from the fact that he appropriates the three proposed tents to the three majestic persons then

before him, without any allusion to himself or his companions, except as those by whom the tents were to be made ; for there is no probability in the opinion that he means to include Jesus when he says, *let us make*. Whether, as some one has ingeniously imagined, he intended to propose that each of the disciples should erect a tent for one of the illustrious trio and then wait upon him in it, is a subtle question neither easy nor necessary to be answered. Another dubious but unessential point is the idea that this proposition was unconsciously suggested by the overwhelming brightness and effulgence of the scene before him, from which he instinctively seeks refuge in the tents which he proposes to erect. This is certainly not obvious or necessary ; nor upon the other hand is it at variance with the main idea, which is evidently that of prolonging the delightful scene by furnishing at least a temporary home and shelter for the august actors. In all the accounts of this untimely but affectionate proposal, Peter names his master first, then Moses, then Elijah, which would seem to militate against the supposition that Mark intended (in v. 4) to represent the third as in any sense superior to the second.

6. For he wist not what to say, for they were sore afraid.

Far from concealing or denying that Peter's proposition was a strange one, the historian offers an apology or explanation of its strangeness. *For he wist* (in modern English *knew*) *not what to say* (or *what he should say*.) It is characteristic of Peter, that he thought he must say something, even then and even there. Equally natural and true is the statement made by Luke (9, 33), that he knew not what he did say or was saying. The cause of both effects was fear, not mere alarm or dread, but also a religious awe, occasioned by the presence of celestial visitants and by the supernatural character of the whole transaction. This effect was common to the three disciples, although intended to explain the words of Peter only, an additional indication that he spoke in their behalf as well as in his own.

7. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them ; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, hear him.

*And there was* (became, or came) *a cloud*, a luminous or bright cloud (Matt. 17, 5), *overshadowing them*, partly as a sign of the divine presence, partly as a veil or screen, beneath the cover of which Moses and Elijah disappeared. *And there came* (not the verb before used, but the ordinary word for coming) *a voice out of the cloud*, in which the speaker seemed to be hidden, *saying* (omitted in the oldest manuscripts, but easily supplied by every reader), *This is my Son, the Beloved*, the very attestation uttered at his baptism (see above, on 1, 11), but without the words, *in whom I am well pleased*, which however are supplied by Matthew (17, 5.) This may therefore be regarded as a

sort of second baptism, to prepare him for his passion as the first did for his ministry, a baptism not with water but with light, not in the stream but "in the cloud" (1 Cor. 10, 2), not by John but (as it were) by Moses and Elijah, not in the presence of the people but in that of the three chosen witnesses. The essential meaning of the voice from heaven is, that Jesus was precisely what he claimed to be, the Son of God as well as Man, divinely sent forth and commissioned as the great prophetic teacher. Hence to the voice uttered at his baptism all the three accounts add two important words, *him hear!* i. e. receive his instructions and obey them as divinely authorized. The impression made by this celestial oracle on Peter was recorded by himself long after, and may still be read in one of his epistles (2 Pet. 1, 17. 18.)

8. And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

The termination of this grand scene was as sudden and abrupt as its beginning. *Looking* (or *having looked*) *around*, in search of those who had been standing near them when the cloud passed over them, *they no longer saw any one*, literally, *no one*, the idiomatic double negative of which we have already had examples. *Save*, except, but (which is the literal translation) *Jesus only* (or *alone*) *with themselves*. According to Mark's narrative, here less minute and graphic than the others although perfectly harmonious, it was while the bright cloud overshadowed the whole party, dazzling and blinding the disciples' eyes and making their ears tingle with those solemn words, that Moses and Elijah silently withdrew.

9. And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

*And they descending* (i. e. while or as they did so) *from the mountain* (see above, on v. 2), *he charged them*, the verb used above in 5, 43. 7, 36. 8, 15, and originally meaning to distinguish or discriminate, but employed as here by Diodorus Siculus. *Tell*, relate, detail, originally meaning to go through with or to lead through (see above, on 5, 16.) *No man*, no one, nobody, without regard to sex or any other personal distinction (see above, on v. 8, and on 2, 21. 22), *what (things)*, or (*the things*) *which they had seen* (or more exactly, *saw*, while on the mount.) *Till*, literally, *if not* (i. e. unless or except), *when* (or after that.) *The Son of Man*, not merely a periphrasis for the pronoun (I), but in its full significancy, as before explained (on 2, 10. 28. 8, 31. 38.) I, who now appear as a mere man and yet am the Messiah so described by Daniel (7, 13.) *From the dead* (i. e. from among them) *should arise*, or be resuscitated (as in 5, 42. 8, 21.)

10. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

*That saying*, literally, *the word* (or *speech*), which may either mean the whole of this command, or the particular expression which they did not understand. In the former case, the verb may denote strict observance and obedience, as the Jews are said to have *held* (or *held fast*) *their traditions* (7, 3. 4. 8), where the Greek verb is the same. The meaning of the whole verse then is, that the three obeyed their Lord's injunction to conceal what they had seen until a certain time, although they did not clearly understand what time he meant. On the other supposition, the verb may mean to *seize*, lay hold of (as in 1, 31. 3, 21. 5, 41. 6, 17), and the whole clause, that they caught at this mysterious expression and discussed among themselves its import. Either of these constructions yields a good sense, but the latter a more striking one, although the former is preferred by most interpreters. *Questioning*, inquiring jointly or together, in the way of conversational discussion (see above, on 1, 27. 8, 11.) *Should mean* (literally, *is*) *the rising from the dead*. The obscurity of this phrase is not to be measured by our own familiar knowledge of it, drawn from the event itself, but by its enigmatical and dubious import when our Lord first used it in foretelling his own passion. To us it may well seem that the words can have but one sense, while to those who originally heard them they might just as well appear equivocal and doubtful.

11. And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?

While they did not venture to demand an explanation of this difficult expression, probably deterred by a foreboding that it veiled some terrible catastrophe approaching, they evinced their interest in what they had just seen by asking an appropriate question in relation to the promised coming of Elijah. *Why*, how is it, *that*, (what is the reason) *that the scribes*, the professional expounders of the law and prophets (see above, on 1, 22), *say* (in that capacity or in their teaching) *that Elias* (Elijah) *must first come*, or that it is necessary for Elias to come first, i. e. before the advent of Messiah himself. Their difficulty seems to have been this, that according to the prophecies, as commonly expounded *ex cathedra*, the Messiah was not to appear until Elijah had come first; but this advent had just taken place, while Jesus had been previously recognized as the Messiah, at least by his apostles (see above, on 8, 29.) They seem to have looked upon the glorious appearance of Elijah which they had just witnessed as the coming prophesied in Malachi, and therefore were perplexed by what appeared to be a preposterous inversion of events, the principal preceding his forerunner. There is something in this question altogether natural, and showing some degree of earnest and intelligent solicitude upon a most important subject, yet entirely consistent with their clouded and imperfect apprehension.

hension of their master's meaning when he spoke of his own death and resurrection.

12. And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of Man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought.

Our Lord's reply determines two important points, the meaning of the prophecy and its fulfilment. In the first place, he confirms the exposition given by the scribes of the prediction found in Malachi. *Verily*, not *amen*, which is so translated in the first verse of this chapter (and in 3, 18. 6, 11. 8, 12), but the usual Greek particle ( $\mu\acute{e}v$ ), expressive of concession, corresponding to *indeed*, or *it is true*, in English. (It is true, as the scribes say, that) *Elijah coming first, restoreth all (things)*, i. e. by announcing the Messiah's advent, and preaching repentance as a preparation for it, brings the people, so far as his influence extends, back to their old theocritical position, which their spiritual leaders had long since forsaken. This appears to be the meaning which our Lord here tacitly attaches to the words of Malachi in speaking of Elijah's reappearance, "he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (Mal. 4, 6), which can hardly refer to mere domestic or contemporary reconciliations, the very opposite of which is represented elsewhere as the effect of his own coming (Matt. 10, 34-36), but must rather be descriptive of an ideal compromise or reconciliation between different generations, by bringing back the later to the principles and practice of the earlier, so far as these were good and in accordance with the true design and spirit of the system under which they lived. What is here taught indirectly and by implication had been long before explicitly propounded by the angel who announced the birth of John the Baptist when he said, reciting and applying the prophetic words of Malachi: "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1, 16. 17.) The office of restorer, thus assigned to the forerunner, may account for the selection of Elijah among all the prophets of the old economy to be his type and representative (see above, on v. 4), and also for our Saviour's application of the verb *restore*, in this place, to Elijah's agency. The next clause is obscure both in grammatical construction and in its connection with the first clause. *How* is properly and commonly a particle of direct interrogation (as in 3, 23. 4, 13. 40. 8, 21), but sometimes, in both languages, is construed indirectly (as in 2, 26. 5, 16.) If the former usage be adopted here, this clause will be a question interposed between the two parts of our Saviour's answer to the question in the foregoing verse, *How has it been written of the Son of Man, &c.?* But as such a question would be here misplaced, if not unmeaning, the preference seems due to the other construc-

tion, which makes *how* and the words following dependent on the verb at the beginning of the verse (he said to them, or told them) *how it has been written of the Son of Man*. The clause is then a parenthetical comment on the one before it, involving an argument *a fortiori*. ‘It is true as the scribes say that the appearance of Elijah is predicted by the prophets ; and remember that the sufferings of the Messiah are predicted likewise, so that if the one prediction has been verified, you may look for the fulfilment of the other also.’ This construction, like the former, is a harsh one, but cannot, like it, be described as unmeaning, since it represents the Saviour as availing himself of the disciples’ question to suggest another of still more importance in relation to himself, and thus perhaps to lessen their bewilderment and wonder at the very thought of his approaching passion. For what had thus been *written of him*, or *upon him*, as the object upon which the prophecy, though long deferred, was finally to terminate, was the very fact which so bewildered them, *that he should suffer*, and particularly suffer death, a pregnant sense of the verb even when absolutely used in the New Testament (see above, on 8, 31, and compare Luke 22, 15. 24, 46. Acts 1, 3. 3, 18. 17, 3. 1 Pet. 2, 21. 3, 18. 4, 1), and in so suffering, both before and at the time of his decease, *should be set at nought*, reduced to nothing, treated as such, a verb not used in classic Greek, but explained by its obvious derivation from the common word for *nothing*. The idiomatic English phrase to *set at nought* may mean to set down, charge, or estimate an object at that value, i. e. to regard and treat it as worth nothing, which is certainly a strong expression of contemptuous rejection.

13. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

Having removed one part of their difficulty as to the sense of the prediction which perplexed them, he removes the other, as to its fulfilment. It was true that according to the scriptures Elijah was to come as a forerunner, and according to the nature of things and the very definition of the term, a forerunner must precede his principal. But so he did in this case. *I say unto you*, I am about to tell you where your error lies, and what it is that occasions your embarrassment. You take for granted that Elijah did not come till now, i. e. long after I had claimed to be the Messiah. *But I tell you* (what you do not as yet understand), *that Elijah is indeed come*, or *has also come*, has not only been predicted but has also (actually) come, i. e. came at the proper time before me, and not after me as you imagine. This implies of course that Malachi’s prediction was fulfilled, not in the glorious appearance of Elijah which they had just witnessed, but in a previous appearance of that prophet. But when was this ? or what had now become of him ? This tacit question is replied to in the last clause. *And they have done to him* (or rather *did*, when he appeared) *whatever they listed or whatever (things) they chose (or wished.) They*

refers to the unbelieving Jews in general, but with special reference to the scribes, already mentioned as their spiritual leaders and expounders of the scripture. Instead of recognizing the Elijah, whose coming as the herald of Messiah they correctly held to be predicted in the last words of the last prophet in their sacred canon, they treated him precisely as they might have treated any other man according to their own capricious will and arbitrary judgment. But even this was comprehended in the prophecy, to wit, in the concluding words of Malachi implying that the mission of Elijah would be either a blessing or a curse to those whom it concerned (Mal. 4, 6.) Even of this rejection, therefore, it might well be added, *as it has been written of him* (or upon him.) The perfect passive in both verses, like the same form in 7, 6, suggests not merely that the words were written centuries ago, nor merely that they were now extant, but that they had been on record and awaiting their fulfilment through the whole of this long interval. Then, as we learn from Matthew (17, 13), although Mark has not recorded it, they understood that the Elijah thus predicted was no other than that John whose disciples some of them had been, and by whom they may all have been baptized.

14. And when he came to (his) disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

*And coming* (or *having come*) *to the disciples*, i. e. to the nine apostles whom he left behind when he withdrew to be transfigured (v. 2), and perhaps some others who were not apostles (see above, on 4, 10.) It is not said where he left them, probably at the foot of the mountain where he was transfigured. *A great multitude*, or more exactly, *much crowd*, implying not mere numbers, but pressure and confusion. *About them*, surrounding the disciples, who would of course be objects of curiosity, if not of worse affections, when the crowd was no longer checked or awed by the presence of the master. *And scribes*, not *the scribes*, as referring to certain individuals of that class; but among the crowd, as might have been expected, he saw scribes, taking the lead in the attack upon the poor defenceless group, who as yet were far from being ready either to defend themselves or to vindicate their master. *Questioning*, disputing in the way of catechising or interrogation, an unequal contest, so far as external advantages were concerned, between the illiterate and partially enlightened followers of Christ on one hand, and the highly educated and experienced scribes upon the other. The subject of inquiry and dispute is now unknown, except so far as it may be inferred from what is stated in the following verses.

15. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to (him), saluted him.

*Straightway*, immediately, as soon as he was visible descending from the mountain. *All the people*, the word translated *multitude* in v. 14, but corresponding more exactly in both places to our *crowd* or *throng*. *Seeing him were amazed*, the qualifying adverb (*greatly*) answering to no distinct Greek word but only to the compound and emphatic form of the verb. Some infer from their amazement that there was still some remnant of the supernatural effulgence which had recently enveloped him, and which attracted the attention of the people even at a distance. But this, though countenanced by the analogy of Moses' face shining when he came down from the mount (Ex. 37, 29-35), is not a necessary supposition in the case before us, where so surprising an appearance would no doubt have been distinctly mentioned, and the verb, although a strong one, does not necessarily denote more than the natural effect produced upon a restless and excited crowd by the sudden appearance of a person whom they had been vainly looking for. *Running to him*, not the whole mass but large numbers, while at least as many may have waited for him where they were. This difference, not only natural but almost unavoidable in all such cases, and suggested here by a comparison of Mark's words, as just given, with Matthew's (*coming to the crowd*) and Luke's (*the crowd met him*), is gravely represented by distinguished writers as a discrepancy which it is dishonest to deny, explain away, or try to reconcile! To most American and English readers such objections rather serve to strengthen than to injure the defences of the Gospel, as evincing that they can be shown to contradict each other only by devices which even the most impudent and mercenary advocate would be ashamed to use in any of our courts of justice. *Saluted him*, or as the Greek word primarily signifies, *welcomed him*, implying or expressing joy at his arrival. This shows that as yet there was no ebb in the tide of our Lord's favour with the masses, whatever may have been the evil dispositions of their leaders towards him.

## 16. And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

*He asked*, interrogated, questioned with authority (see above, on 5, 9, 8, 5, 23.) *The scribes*, or, according to the latest critics, simply *them*, which means the same thing, as it was the scribes who were before said (v. 14) to have been disputing with them. *What question ye with them*, or according to the margin of the English Bible, *among yourselves*, a version resting on a slight difference of text contained in some old copies, and only affecting a single letter or perhaps an aspiration, not expressed in the most ancient manuscripts and therefore lawful subject of conjecture. According to this reading, the address is to the crowd collectively, including both the scribes and the disciples. According to the other, which is regarded as the true one by the best authorities, the words were spoken to the scribes alone, and were intended to transfer their opposition from the disciples to our Lord himself. *What question ye*, i. e. what is the subject of your disputatious

and litigious questions, or, as the words may also be translated, *why question ye*, implying that there was no proper or sufficient ground for their proceedings. *With them*, a Greek phrase not denoting mere conjunction or association, but rather opposition, either indirect (*at them*) or direct (*against them*.)

17. And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit.

Unless this be regarded as a sheer interruption which prevented his inquiry being answered at all, it would appear from this verse that the subject of dispute had been the right or the power of dispossessing demons, which the scribes may have reproached the nine for not possessing or untruly claiming; or they may perhaps have gone so far as to deny the same thing with respect to Christ himself, or to renew the odious accusation of collusion with the evil one (see above, on 3, 22.) That their disputations were in some way connected with the case of demoniacal possession here described, appears to follow from the natural and obvious meaning of the participle *answering* (i. e. replying to the question in v. 16), which, although not always necessarily suggested by the verb to *answer* (see above, on vs. 5, 12), is undoubtedly entitled to the preference when other things are equal. *One of the multitude*, or rather, *one out of the crowd*, the construction being not that of a simple genitive, but of a preposition meaning *from* or *out of*. The meaning then is, not that this man was one among the many present, but that he spoke from the midst of the assembled multitude in answer to the Saviour's question. *I have brought*, or rather, as the verb is not a perfect but an aorist, *I brought* (i. e. a little while ago) *my son to thee*, expressing the intention of his coming though he found Christ absent. The remainder of the verse describes the cause of his son's sufferings. *Having* (in him or united with him, see above, on 3, 30. 7, 25) *a dumb* (or *speechless*) *spirit* (see above, on 7, 37.) This may mean a demon by whose presence and possession the demoniac was silenced, or deterred from using his powers of speech, either by physical or moral interference. Or it may mean, as some interpreters suppose, that the spirit was a silent one compared with those so frequently described as crying out. The former meaning is more obvious and pertinent, as this is evidently a description, not of the evil spirit's habits as to speech or silence, but of the morbid influence exerted by him on his victim, and from which he might himself, without absurdity or even violation of usage, be described as dumb or speechless.

18. And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him; and he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away; and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not.

Here again, as in the case of the transfiguration (see above, on v. 3), the three accounts are remarkably full and strongly expressed, yet very different, the only satisfactory solution of which is, that each has preserved some of the expressions used by the afflicted father, an eclectic process which is so far from being artificial or unnatural, as some unfriendly critics and their humble imitators have alleged, that it is constantly occurring both in formal trials and in common conversation, wherever a plurality of witnesses relate the same thing, if it comprehend a number of particulars, all which are not essential to the purpose of the narrative or statement. Leaving out of view, therefore, the peculiar symptoms here described by Luke (9, 39) and Matthew (17, 39), and confining our attention to those given by Mark, we find that they make up a fearful but consistent and intelligible picture of severe and, as we learn from the context, preternatural disease. *Wheresoever* (or in modern phrase *whererer*), in whatever place, *it taketh him*, not carries or transports but simply seizes him, a verb elsewhere metaphorically used (except in John 8, 3, 4), but always in the same essential sense of grasping, apprehending, either with the mind or body. It is, to say the least, a curious coincidence that this verb is the root or theme of the medical terms *catalepsy*, *cataleptic*, though the symptoms here described are more like those of the disease distinguished by the kindred terms *epilepsy*, *epileptic*, which are from the same verb but compounded with another preposition. *Wherero**ver it* (the demon) *taketh him*, implies that he was liable to violent and sudden seizures, which could not be certainly foreseen. *Teareth* (margin, *dasheth*) *him*, or as the Greek word properly and commonly means, *breaketh him* (in pieces), which appears to be a lively figure for convulsions, as a momentary dislocation of the whole frame. Thus far the subject of the verbs, implied though not expressed, is the demon. By an almost insensible transition, showing how complete the union was supposed to be, the verbs that follow must be construed with the human subject, as controlled and tortured by the evil spirit. *Gnashes with* (or retaining the original construction, *grinds*) *his teeth*, as an expression both of rage and pain. *And pineth away*, or rather, as the effect described is not a gradual or lasting but a sudden and a temporary one, *is parched* (or *dried*), not permanently withered (as in 3, 1, 3, compare 4, 6, 5, 29). the transient nature of the symptom being indicated by the others mentioned with it. *I spake to thy disciples* (when he could not find the Lord himself), i. e. asked them, requested them, as appears from what immediately follows, *that*, in order that, denoting strictly the design or object of his speaking, but by necessary implication also what he spoke (see above, on vs. 9, 12) *they should* (or *would*) *cast it out* (expel or dispossess it), *and they could not*, not a mere auxiliary tense, nor even the common verb meaning *to be able*, but a more emphatic one denoting that they were not powerful or strong enough to do it, and suggesting more distinctly the idea that he looked upon it as a case requiring more than ordinary power, either natural or superhuman, of which power he found the nine disciples destitute. (Compare the use of the same verb in 5, 4.)

19. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me.

*And answering him*, or, according to the oldest copies and the latest critics, *them*. *Faithless*, i. e. without faith, in either of its senses, namely, faithfulness, fidelity (as in our phrases, good faith, bad faith), belief, trust, especially in God or Christ. The word here used has the former meaning in the classics and the latter in the scriptures (see John 20, 27. 1 Cor. 7, 12-15, and compare the cognate noun in 6, 6 above and v. 24 below.) The same word is given by Matthew (17, 17) and Luke (9, 41), but with the addition of another, meaning twisted, distorted, and in a moral sense perverted or perverse (compare Acts 13, 8. 10. 20, 30.) The epithet is therefore expressive of strong moral censure or disapprobation, as is also the reproachful question which now follows. *How long*, literally, *until when*, implying either that the time was short, or that their perverseness was no longer endurable. *With you* is the exact sense of the phrase used by Matthew ( $\mu\epsilon\theta'$   $\nu\mu\hat{\omega}\nu$ ); that of Mark and Luke ( $\pi\rho\delta'$   $\nu\mu\hat{\alpha}s$ ) is more expressive, meaning strictly close to, at you, implying the most intimate proximity or nearness (as in John 1, 1. 2.) *Bear you*, or *bear with you*, a Greek verb originally meaning to hold up, and in the middle voice to hold one's self up under any burden, i. e. to support, to bear, especially, to bear with patience what is trying and vexatious (compare Acts 18, 14. 2 Cor. 11, 1. 4. 19. 20. Eph. 4, 2.) Here again the question (*how long?*) is equivalent to saying positively, not long or not much longer, and the sentence thus far is a strong expression of impatience and displeasure at the unbelief of those to whom it is addressed. The only doubt is, who are here addressed, and of whose unbelief our Lord so bitterly complains. Some have referred it to the father of the child, who had just spoken, and to whom our Lord replied according to the common text (*to him*.) But even if this be the correct reading, the reproach could not be meant for him alone; not only because it is unduly severe, but because it is expressly applied to a whole generation, not to any individual, except as belonging to and representing it. Another explanation is, that it relates to the disciples, who had failed to work the miracle through want of faith (Matt. 17, 20.) The meaning of the question then may be, 'how long do you expect me to be constantly at hand, to supply your lack of faith or service? and how long do you expect me to endure this culpable deficiency on your part?' The objection to this still is, that the term *generation* is too strong for a small company, or even for the larger body of disciples in the wide sense, though it may include them. On the whole, therefore, it is best to understand the words of the contemporary race, with whom our Lord had come in contact, and of whose unbelief and perverseness particular examples were afforded in this instance by the malignant opposition of the scribes, as well as by the weakness or deficiency of faith in the disciples, and perhaps in the person who applied to them for healing (see below, on v. 24.) This almost passionate expostulation is succeeded by an order to present the de-

moniac once more. *Bring him to me*, with emphasis upon the pronoun: as you have already tried the healing power of my followers now try mine.

20. And they brought him unto him; and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming.

The plural form (*they brought*) may be indefinitely understood as simply meaning that *he was brought* in obedience to the order, but more probably implies that he was carried, and that the combined strength of several was rendered necessary by his weight and his resistance. The struggle of the patient with his friends or bearers brought on a distressing paroxysm, here ascribed expressly to the demon who possessed him. *Seeing him*, i. e. when the demoniac saw Jesus, the participle being masculine in form, while *spirit* (the noun following) is neuter. This irregular construction corresponds to the real complication of two personal agencies in all cases of possession. *Tare him*, tore or rent him, not the same verb that is used above in v. 18, but meaning the same thing, and applied by Hippocrates to spasmodic retching or attempts to vomit. *Falling on the ground* (or earth), *he* (the demoniac) *wallowed*, rolled himself, a verb applied by Homer to a voluntary rolling in the dust as a customary sign of grief. *Foaming*, a symptom still observed in epileptic fits, and mentioned in the previous description of the case before us (see above, v. 18.)

21. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

*And he asked*, interrogated, questioned, the intensive compound used above in vs. 11. 16, and often elsewhere, always implying more than an indifferent or curious asking. *How long is it ago*, literally, *how much time*, a combination also used by Sophocles and other Attic writers. *Since*, literally, *that or as*, which might also be construed with the next word as a particle of likeness or comparison, *as this, like this, thus*; but the other construction is more natural, and some connective is required between *how long* and what follows. *This came unto him* (came to pass or happened to him, see above, on vs. 3. 7.) *Of a child*, in modern English, *from a child*, i. e. from childhood, a relative expression which determines nothing as to his exact age. The original expression is a single word, not found in the classics, but obviously formed by adding to the noun *child* (the one used above in 5, 39–41. 7, 28), a syllable ( $\theta\epsilon\nu$ ) employed in Greek to form a local adverb meaning from a place (e. g.  $o\acute{u}par\acute{o}\beta\epsilon\nu$  from heaven, Acts 14, 17. 26, 13.) The Vatican and other ancient copies prefix a preposition (*from*) which, though apparently superfluous, may be designed to strengthen the expression (even from, or ever since, his childhood.)

22. And oft-times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters to destroy him. But if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

Besides answering the question, which was no doubt intended to convince the lookers-on that this was no recent, much less an imaginary affection, but a case of long standing, the father naturally adds a few particulars, preserved by Mark alone. *Oft-times*, a poetical expression, at least not used in modern prose by good writers, and here employed to represent a single word exactly answering to *often*. *It* (the evil spirit) *hath cast*, or more exactly, *did cast*, i. e. while he was at home, before he came here. *Waters*, in classical Greek a poetical plural, but in Hellenistic usage answering to the Hebrew word which, like the one for heaven (see above on 1, 10. 11), has no singular. *To destroy him*, literally, *that it* (the demon) *might destroy him* (the demoniac.) *But* (though the case is so severe and so inveterate), *if any (thing) thou canst* (art able to perform), *help* (succour) *us*, a most expressive Greek verb, which according to its etymology originally means to run ( $\theta\acute{e}\omega$ ) at the war-cry or a cry for help ( $\betaο\eta\gamma$ ), then in a more general sense to help or rescue in emergency, to *succour*, a word of kindred origin in Latin, although less expressive, meaning simply to run up (*succurro*), without suggesting the occasion as the Greek does. *Having compassion*, or retaining the passive form of the original, *moved with pity*, the peculiar Hellenistic or New Testament expression used above in 1, 41. 6, 34, and there explained. The change of collocation in the version is not only not required by the difference of idiom, but detracts from the force of the original, *if any thing thou canst (do), help us, yearning over us* (or moved with pity towards us.) Importunate and earnest as this prayer appears, and in itself expressive of a strong faith, it is to be qualified by the conditional phrase which precedes it, *if thou canst*, implying some doubt of our Lord's ability to grant what he desired, perhaps occasioned by his previous disappointment and the failure of the nine disciples (see above, on v. 18.)

23. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things (are) possible to him that believeth.

*And Jesus said to him*, not overlooking this indication of defective faith, *If thou canst believe*, that is the true condition, not my power but thy faith, the one being infinite, the other finite and defective. The difficulty is not upon my side but thy own; ask not what is possible to me, but what is possible to thee, for *all things are possible to the (one) believing* (the believer.) This most interesting sentence varies considerably in the copies and editions, but with more effect upon the form than the essential meaning. Several of the oldest manuscripts and versions omit *believe* in the first clause and read simply, *if thou canst*. This may be taken as an abbreviation of the common text and meaning the same thing, *if thou canst (do thy part)* i. e. believe, as suggested in the last clause. There is however one striking

feature in the Greek text, which does not appear in the translation though contained in all the manuscripts, and which may seem to indicate a different construction. This is the neuter article (*τό*, *the*) prefixed to the words *if thou canst*, and according to Greek usage marking them as a quotation, which can only be reproduced in English by approximation, ‘the (or this) expression, If thou canst.’ This would seem to make the words a repetition by our Lord himself of what the man had first said, and accordingly the Arabic and Coptic versions paraphrase it, ‘what is this thou sayest. If thou canst?’ The modern critics, who exclude *believe* (*πιστεῖσαι*) from the text, treat what remains as a question or an exclamation. *If thou canst?* or *If thou canst!* But one of the most learned and ingenious gives the same sense without any omission by construing *believe* as an imperative. *If thou canst! believe!* i. e. instead of questioning my power, do your own part by believing. But besides the harshness of thus separating the two verbs, the imperative meaning of the form (*πιστεῖσαι*), though according to analogy, is not sufficiently sustained by usage. On the whole, the choice lies between the common text in its obvious sense, *if thou canst believe*, as the condition of the healing, and the Vatican or shorter reading, *if thou canst!* as an indignant repetition of the man’s own words, considered as betraying a deficiency of faith. The ultimate question is one of criticism rather than interpretation, and although the evidence in favour of the shorter is very strong, it hardly seems sufficient to outweigh the other, with its far more natural and easy though less pointed syntax and interpretation.

24. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

*Straightway*, immediately, at once, without delay, as soon as he heard this most gracious declaration. *Crying (out)*, not *weeping*, but calling aloud, speaking with a loud voice. *The child* may possibly be nothing more than a correlative to *the father*, as we constantly speak of a man’s *children* even though they may be far advanced in age. But as this relation would have been sufficiently expressed by *father*, and as the other Greek word always elsewhere means a child in age as well as in relation, it is better to explain it as determining in this case that the patient was a boy and not a man (see above, on v. 20.) *With tears* is another phrase excluded by the latest critics, because not found in the oldest manuscripts. Though not certainly spurious, its omission detracts nothing from the narrative, except a single graphic circumstance of no importance although interesting and affecting. Another omission, on the same authority, is that of *Lord*, which though it may not be sufficiently attested, rather strengthens than enfeebles the reply by reducing it in compass. The reply itself is one of the most beautiful on record, even in the Gospels. *I believe, I do believe*, as thou requirest, although not in the degree which I now see to be incumbent, and for which I am no less dependent upon thee than for the miracle

itself. *Help*, succour, therefore, first my unbelief (i. e. my insufficiency of faith), and then my wretched child whose cure depends upon it. There is singular beauty in the repetition of the same expressive verb which he had used before in praying for his son's relief. On hearing that the only requisite is faith, and feeling that his own was weaker than it should be, he withdraws, as it were for a moment, his original petition, to implore another kind of help or succour, in default of which the first was unattainable. As if he had said, 'I cried for help or succour, in the name of my afflicted child; but finding that my faith is the condition, and that although I believe my faith is still defective, I now cry for help and succour in my own name, that my weak faith may be strengthened, and that thus my child may be relieved at last.' The episode contained in these four verses (21-24), which is one of the most exquisite in scripture or in history, authentic or fictitious, is preserved to us exclusively by Mark, and commonly regarded as among the vivid reminiscences of Peter, under whose authority an old tradition represents this evangelist as having written. In this, as in the case of the paralytic at Capernaum (2, 5), the daughter of the Syro-phenician woman (7, 29), and no doubt a multitude of others not recorded in detail, it was the faith of the friends or parents that secured the miracle, that of the immediate subject being in abeyance, although no doubt retrospectively exerted afterwards. This furnishes a beautiful analogy, though not a formal argument, in favour of accepting the vicarious faith of parents or their nearest representatives, as being a sufficient warrant for the baptism and reception into Christ's flock or household, even of such as cannot as yet profess their own faith, although bound by the act of those who take their place, to believe hereafter for themselves, and to assume the vows which others have made for them.

25. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, (Thou) dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

*And (or but) Jesus seeing that the crowd runs together (or is running together) upon (him, or the place where he was standing as the point of chief attraction.)* The present tense as usual calls up the scene as actually passing. The Greek verb, although found only here, is evidently formed by prefixing to a verb (*run together*) very common in the classics and occasionally found in the New Testament (see above, 6, 33, and compare Acts 3, 11. 1 Pet. 4, 4), a particle which gives it the specific sense of running together to, at, or upon a given place or object, which is here of course the spot where Christ was standing over the unhappy demoniac as he wallowed foaming on the ground before him. This circumstance is mentioned here, not only as a vivid trait impressed upon the memory of those who saw it, but as furnishing a motive for our Lord's healing him at once, without pursuing, as he might have

done, the interesting conversation with his father. *Rebuked*, checked with authority, but also with implied disapprobation, censure, of his presence and his conduct (see above, on 1, 25. 4, 39. 8, 32, 33, and for another application of the same verb, 3, 12. 8, 30.) *Foul*, the word invariably rendered *unclean* both in this book (e. g. 1, 23. 3, 11. 5, 2, 6, 7, 7, 25) and in other parts of the New Testament, except in Rev. 18, 2, and in the case before us, where there can be ground for a variation, since it means here as elsewhere morally impure, and is applied in that sense to the demon as a fallen angel. *Thou*, though not expressed in Greek, is more agreeable to our idiom in this connection than the article (*the dumb and deaf*.) By thus describing or addressing him, our Lord connects the morbid state of the demoniac, in the clearest manner, with the presence of the demon, to the utter exclusion of all oriental metaphors or strong personification of diseases. *I charge thee*, not the word so rendered in 3, 12. 8, 30, which is the one here translated *rebuked*, nor that so rendered in 5, 43. 7, 36. 8, 15. 9, 9; but the one rendered by *command* in 1, 27. 6, 27. 39, and there explained as a military term implying high authority and prompt obedience. *And no more enter into him*, a merciful provision for the future, not invariably added (compare Matt. 12, 43-45. Luke 11, 24-26), and therefore mentioned here by Mark as a peculiar or at least a striking feature of this interesting miracle.

26. And (the spirit) cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him, and he was as one dead ; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

*Crying and tearing* (or *convulsing*) *him*, the same verbs that are used above in vs. 20, 24, and there explained. According to the common text the participial forms are neuter, agreeing with *spirit* understood, which is accordingly supplied in the translation. But the Vatican and several other ancient copies, followed by the latest critics, have the masculine in either case, a variation purely formal, as *spirit* is only grammatically neuter, and the unclean spirit here in question was as really a person as the man (or boy) whom he possessed. *Crying*, not being followed by the verb *said* or the words spoken, as in v. 24, denotes an inarticulate cry of rage or pain, and is therefore not at variance with the previous description of the spirit as a deaf and dumb one (see above, on vs. 17, 25.) *Sore*, i. e. much or very much, a literal translation of the Greek word (see above, on 6, 51.) This convulsion was the last expression of malignant rage upon the part of the retiring demon. *He became as dead*, or *as if* (he were) *a dead* (man), the long continued preternatural excitement being succeeded by exhaustion (see above, on 7, 30.) *Insomuch that* is in Greek a single word corresponding to our common phrase *so that*, both forms being used convertibly by our translators (compare 1, 27. 45. 2, 2. 12. 3, 10 with 3, 20. 4, 1. 32, 37.) *Many*, or according to the latest text, *the many* (the accusative of a phrase now almost Anglicised, *οἱ πόλλοι*), i. e. the majority, the most of those present and beholding. *Said*, *He is dead*, seems to

give the very words, whereas in Greek the form is that of indirect citation, *said that he was dead*. This is another slight but vivid recollection, giving an air of life and truthfulness to the entire narrative, and furnishing an admirable subject for the pencil, in the eager crowd surrounding the inanimate form of the demoniac, with the anxious face of the rejoicing father, and the august person of the Saviour in the centre of the living circle.

27. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and he arose.

*But (or and) Jesus taking (seizing, laying hold of) him by the hand (or according to the critics, his hand), raised (or roused, awakened) him, and he arose (or stood up.)* This may be regarded as a sort of supplementary or secondary miracle, by which the youth, forsaken by the fiend but left to all appearance dead, was instantaneously restored to health and strength. It may have been to mark this twofold wonder and prevent the second being overlooked in admiration of the first, that Christ, instead of making him recover by degrees or at a word, employed the usual external act by which the person of the healer was visibly connected with the subject of the miracle. For the usage of the verbs in this verse, see above, on v. 10. 1, 31. 5, 41. 42.

28. And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

We now learn that the failure of the nine to dispossess this demon was not merely a refusal to attempt it, but an actual attempt without success, so that the father of the patient spoke advisedly and truly when he said they were not strong enough (or had not power) to expel it (see above, on v. 18.) This implies that their commission to work miracles, and more particularly miracles of this kind (see above, on 6, 7), still continued, and that this was not a mere unauthorized attempt to do what lay entirely beyond their province, but a mysterious and mortifying failure to accomplish what they had before done (see above, on 6, 30) and considered themselves still authorized and empowered to do. It is not surprising, therefore, that it had provoked the scorn and captious curiosity of the scribes (see above, on vs. 14. 16), nor that the disciples took the first opportunity of private conversation with their master, to inquire into the occasion of this unexpected failure in the most remarkable if not the most important of their apostolic functions. The original construction of the first clause is peculiar. *Him, having gone into the house, his disciples questioned.* *Into the house* seems to point out some particular dwelling well known either to the reader or the writer, or at least to mean the house near which the miracle had been performed. But the original expression (*into house*, without the article) means simply in-doors as opposed to out-of-doors, a sense in

which we have already met with it. (See above, on 3, 19. 7, 17, and for the meaning *home*, on 2, 1. 5, 19. 8, 3. 26.) Asked him, earnestly and anxiously questioned him (see above, on vs. 11. 16. 21.) Privately, apart, alone, or in a private place (see above, on v. 2, and on 6, 31. 7, 33.) Why, literally, that, the same elliptical expression (for *why is it that*) which occurs above in v. 11, and is there explained. Could not we, were we not able to expel it, the spirit, here again grammatically neuter, though the version has the masculine form (*him*), a needless variation from that used in v. 22, where the neuter pronoun is not expressed as it is here. This question again presupposes, first, that they had thought themselves able to perform the miracle, and then, that they had found themselves unable upon trial. It was not therefore a habitual or constant inability, but one which took themselves and others by surprise, and gave occasion to this very question.

29. And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

The answer of our Lord to such a question still excites the strongest curiosity and interest, and none the less so from its brevity and doubtful meaning. *This kind*, genus, species, as the same word (*γένος*) means in Matt. 13, 47. 1 Cor. 12, 10. 28. 14, 10. The sense may then be, this peculiar kind of suffering or infliction cannot be removed or put an end to, without prayer and fasting. But as this construction takes the verb (*εξελθεῖν*) in a somewhat unusual and forced sense, it is better to give the noun its primary (or secondary) meaning of a race or nation, elsewhere used of human races (see above, on 7, 26, and compare Acts 4, 36. 7, 13. 13, 26. 18, 2. 24. Gal. 1, 14. 1 Pet. 2, 9), but here applied, without a change of meaning, to another race or order of beings, but one closely connected with the history and destiny of mankind (see above, on 3, 32.) *This race* (of demons, evil spirits, fallen angels) *can* (is able) *to go out* (i. e. to leave the men whom they possess) *in nothing* (i. e. in the use of no means) *but* (if not, except) *in* (i. e. in the use or exercise of) *prayer and fasting*. It is worthy of attention that he does not say it cannot be expelled or cast out, but that it cannot go or come out, in any other way or in the use of any other means. Whether this is to be strictly understood, as meaning that the demons who possessed men could not, even if they would, forsake them without prayer and fasting, or to be taken as a less emphatic mode of saying that they cannot be expelled or cast out save in this way, is a question not determined by the text or context. If decided by the general laws of language and interpretation, one of which is that the strict sense is entitled to the preference when other things are equal, then the Saviour must be understood as saying, that the evil spirit once in occupation of a man could not, even of its own accord, forsake him without prayer and fasting. Most interpreters, however, and probably most readers, understand him as declaring these to be indispensable means of exorcism, that is for the forcible expulsion of the foul fiend from the persons of the men whom he possesses. But the question still arises, who are

to employ these means? Of course not the demon to be dispossessed, but either the demoniac or the exorcist. But the former *ex hypothesi* was not in a condition to make use of any means, and least of all such spiritual means as prayer and fasting, for his own deliverance; nor do we find a single instance of a person thus possessed, so long as the possession lasted, asking or even consenting to be freed from it, but always acting as the organ of the demon in resisting every attempt at dis-possession, even on the part of Christ himself (see above, on 1, 24. 5, 7). The only remaining supposition therefore is, that they who undertook this solemn office must employ the means here mentioned. There is nothing, either in the words themselves or the connection, to require or sanction any other than the usual and proper sense of *prayer and fasting*, not as stated and still less as ceremonial observances, but as special or extraordinary means and modes of spiritual discipline, not independent of each other, but the abstinence from food giving energy and life to the devotions. This simple discipline is here prescribed, not as the *causa qua*, but simply as a *causa sine qua non*, of all effectual exorcism. The idea that by prayer and fasting men can cast out devils or work other wonders now, is not only fanatical but foolish, since the precept is addressed to men on whom the power of performing such extraordinary cures had been conferred expressly (see above, on 6, 7), but whose exercise of this extraordinary power had been hindered by neglecting their own spiritual discipline, which they are here taught to renew, as something indispensable to their success. As well might one who heard a surgical instructor tell his pupils that they could not operate successfully without a due regard to their own diet, sleep, and exercise, presume to act as surgeons in the most important cases, without any preparation but these dietetic counsels. It is not easy to determine whether this reply, preserved by Mark and Matthew (Luke omitting the whole conversation), is entirely distinct from that prefixed to it by Matthew (17, 20), or related to it as a means to an end; i. e. whether the failure of the nine disciples sprang from want of faith as one cause and from neglect of prayer and fasting as another, or from debility of faith occasioned by neglect of prayer and fasting. The latter is more probable as Mark omits the other altogether, which he would hardly have done, if he had undertaken to assign the cause at all, and this had been an independent part of it. The most probable conclusion, on the whole, is that the disciples, relying on their extraordinary powers, had neglected the spiritual discipline essential to their exercise, because essential to faith or confidence in Christ's right and power to commission them as wonder-workers, and to sustain them in their practice as such, a deficiency of which faith is the other reason for their present failure here assigned by Matthew (17, 20.)

30. And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know (it).

*And thence*, from that place where the miracle last mentioned had been wrought, and of which we only know that it must have been near

the scene of the transfiguration (see above, on vs. 2, 14.) *Going out*, departing, or more specifically *going forth* upon their journey to Capernaum (v. 33), or their circuit which had been interrupted for a short time. *They passed*, or more exactly *passed by*, or travelled along, the object being understood or latent in the next phrase, not suggested distinctly by the context as it is in 11, 20 (where it is the fig-tree), and in 15, 29 (where it is the cross), but more like the use of the same verb in 2, 23, where also it is followed by the same preposition. *They travelled along* (the high road, or their own appointed course) *through Galilee*, performing still another circuit or itinerant mission through that province (see above, on 1, 9. 14. 28. 39.) *Would not*, wished not, was unwilling (see above, on v. 13, and on 7, 24. 9, 30.) *Any man*, i. e. any one, any body (see above, on v. 8, and on 2, 21. 3, 27. 5, 3. 37. 7, 24.) *Know (it)*, i. e. the fact that he was there or journeying in this way; but more probably it means *know (him)*, i. e. recognize him as he journeyed or before he reached the points where he was pleased to manifest himself. This is the same precaution which we have so often met with to escape, as far as possible, the pressure of the crowd, and to prevent all dangerous excitement and tumultuous assemblies of the people. But in this case there was an additional reason for his caution, which is stated in the next verse.

31. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.

*For* assigns a special reason of the secrecy just mentioned, namely, that *he taught his disciples*, i. e. he was teaching them, not at any one time but throughout this visitation, the sad lesson of his now approaching passion. This implies that he was now engaged in a new course of instruction, different from that which he had previously given, and intended to prepare them for approaching changes. *And said to them*, Mark's favourite expression to denote a change of subject. (See above, on 4, 13. 21. 24. 26. 30.) *That* necessarily omitted in the version but here employed to introduce the substance of his new instruction. *The Son of Man*, the Messiah, whom you recognize as such, though clothed in the form of a servant. *Is delivered*, a prophetic present, representing the event, because so certain, as already taking place; or a literal present, but referring to the plan or purpose rather than its execution. The delivery here spoken of is not that by Judas to the Jews, or by the Jews to the Gentiles, but by God to men, abandoning him to their will (compare Acts, 2, 23), and that for a particular end perfectly foreseen. *And they*, i. e. men, as yet not further specified, *shall kill him*, and *being killed* (or *having been killed*), on *the third day he shall rise* (or be resuscitated.) The reading substituted by the latest critics, *after three days*, means precisely the same thing according to the Jewish method of computing time. This is the third distinct prediction of his

passion since his recognition by the twelve disciples as the true Messiah. (See above, on 8, 31, 9, 12.)

32. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

*But they* (the disciples) *understood not*, in Greek a negative verb meaning not to know, perceive, or understand, according to the context. *That* (literally *the*) *saying*, namely that which they had just heard in relation to his death and resurrection. This can seem incredible only to such as are unable to divest themselves of subsequent associations, and distinguish between what we now see clearly and what we should have seen if we had lived before the death of Christ. Precisely the same difference existed and exists between all fulfilled and unfulfilled prophecy. Predictions in the book of Revelation, and in many other parts of scripture, which are now most variously understood, will seem to those who witness or live after the event, too clear to be mistaken, too distinct and unequivocal to bear more than one interpretation. It is easy now to say that the disciples *must* have understood him when he said he was to die and rise again, and therefore that his words could not have been so plain as the evangelists report them. But how could the interpreter himself have known whether Christ's predicted crucifixion was to be more literal than that which he enjoined upon his followers (see above, on 8, 34), or whether his garments were to be divided, and his thirst assuaged with vinegar and gall, in a literal or figurative sense? Because we know now how these things were to come to pass, it does not follow that we could have known before they did so come to pass. The mere simplicity and definiteness of the language matters not, so long as there is any doubt as to the principle on which we are to understand it. Nay, the more direct and unequivocal the terms may seem, the more uncertain will the meaning be, until this previous question is determined. There is therefore nothing in the least improbable, much less incredible, in what we read of the disciples' doubts and difficulties, as to what appears to us so perfectly explicit and intelligible. The only wonder is that, having both the author and the subject of these prophecies before them, they did not obtain from him a full solution of the riddles which perplexed them. But of this Mark gives the explanation in the last clause of the verse before us, *they were afraid to ask* (or *feared to question*) *him*. Here again the narrative is far more "psychological" and true to nature than the frivolous objection urged against it. However easy it may be to lay down rules *a priori*, as to what men will or will not do in certain situations, we all know by experience that such rules are continually falsified in practice, that men do hesitate to ask the most important questions of their nearest relatives and dearest friends, under the influence of motives which they cannot analyze themselves, much less interpret to the minds of others. But if such reserves and reticencies, often most disastrous to the interests of those who practice them, are things of daily observation and experience, in cases where no motive can be traced at

all, who will venture to deny their possibility when generated or enforced by awful reverence for Christ as personally present, and perhaps by vague forebodings that his presence was to cease, and an accompanying aversion to know more distinctly when or how. Such feelings have in multitudes of cases sealed the lips of wives and husbands, parents and children, brothers and sisters, nay of mere acquaintances and friends, when death was apprehended but its time and circumstances willingly unknown, and even banished from the thoughts of those whom interest and duty should alike have led to look it in the face and to prepare for it. But if such things as these are natural and possible in every-day experience, who will deny the possibility or aggravate the guilt of the reserve here practised by the twelve in all the weakness and darkness of their pupillary state, when they knew not what their master meant by these distressing premonitions of his death, and *were afraid to ask him?*

33. And he came to Capernaum ; and being in the house, he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way ?

*And he came into Capernaum*, which had long been the centre of his operations, and where all his missionary journeys terminated. Passing over a remarkable occurrence introduced just here by Matthew (17, 24-27), Mark relates, in harmony with that evangelist (17, 28) and Luke (9, 46), an interesting conversation which appears to have been held soon after their arrival, and which serves to illustrate Christ's omniscience and his wisdom, and the still contracted views of his disciples in relation to his kingdom, thus elucidating further their misapprehension of his prophecies respecting his own passion. *In the house*, a definite expression meaning in his own house or the house where he resided, possibly the house of Peter. (See above, on 1, 29.) *Being*, not the mere verb of existence, but the one denoting change and frequently equivalent to our *becoming*, i. e. beginning to be. Here it necessarily suggests without expressing the idea of his previous arrival, having got to the house, as we might say in more familiar English. *He asked them*, questioned them, the same emphatic compound that occurs so often in this book, and never in the simple sense of asking. Here it evidently means to catechize, examine, in a searching and authoritative manner. *What (or why) in the way* (along the road, upon the journey to Capernaum) *did ye dispute*, a Greek verb hitherto translated *reason* in this book (see above, on 2, 6. 8. 8, 16. 17), here meaning to discuss or canvass a disputed question. *Among yourselves*, or *to yourselves*, i. e. apart from me, and as you thought without my knowledge. The idea of reciprocal or mutual communication is otherwise expressed in the ensuing verse.

34. But they held their peace : for by the way they had disputed among themselves who (should be) the greatest.

*But (or and) they held their peace,* were silent, a verb which has no exact equivalent in English, one of those unaccountable deficiencies which constitute so striking a diversity in languages, such as the absence of the verb *to have* in all Semitic dialects, of *stand* in French, &c. *They were silent*, no doubt both with wonder and confusion at this startling question, which at once recalled their own disgraceful conflict and evinced their master's perfect knowledge of it, notwithstanding the precautions which had probably been used to hide it from his observation. If so, we have here accumulated proof of their contracted views and still debased condition both of judgment and affection with respect to the Messiah's kingdom. This they still regarded as an earthly state, in which they were to occupy distinguished places as compared with other men; but not content with this collective eminence, they now disputed as to rank among themselves. *Disputed*, not the word so rendered in v. 33, though ultimately from the same root; but in that the prominent idea is calculation, while in this it is discourse, the Greek verb being the etymon of *dialogue*, *dialect*, and *dialectics*. *Among themselves*, a wholly different expression from the one in the preceding verse, and meaning strictly *to (or with) each other*. *Who (should be) the greatest*, or more exactly, *which (of them) was greater* (than the rest.) It is not improbable that such disputes, if not begun by Peter, James, and John, were at least occasioned by the real prominence which Christ assigned them in the college of apostles, and which could hardly fail to rouse the jealousy and envy of the rest, especially if urged unduly and unwisely by themselves. (See above, on v. 2.)

35. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, (the same) shall be last of all, and servant of all.

*And having sat (or sitting) down*, i. e. when he had sat down on coming in, which seems to imply that this conversation took place at the very time of their arrival (Matt. 18, 1.) *Called the twelve*, not *them*, as in vs. 33. 34, which may perhaps imply that what is there said relates to a still greater number. *If any (one) desire*, the verb so often rendered *will* and *would*. *First* in rank and dignity compared with others. *The same*, which seems to be emphatic, is supplied by the translators, the subject of the verb being not expressed at all but indicated by the form of the verb itself, which simply means *he shall be*. This appears to include both a threatening and a precept, according to the motive which leads any one to wish for the pre-eminence. If actuated by a selfish pride, he shall, as a righteous retribution, be defeated in his plans of self-aggrandizement; instead of being first, *he shall be last of all*, the least regarded and esteemed. If, on the other hand, he wishes to be truly first, in usefulness and goodness, he must be voluntarily the *last of all*, not only as to rank but as to active service, an idea separately expressed in the concluding words, *and servant of all*. The Greek noun is not that which means a slave (*δοῦλος*), but one which properly denotes a waiter or attendant on the

table, one who waits upon the person and supplies the wants of his employer or his master. Hence it was afterwards applied, not only to the Christian ministry in general, as stewards, providers, and attendants on the people of the Lord (1 Cor. 3, 5. 2 Cor. 3, 6. 6, 4. 11, 23. Eph. 3, 7. Col. 1, 7. 23. 25. 4, 7. 1 Th. 3, 2. 1 Tim. 4, 6), but more distinctively to the lowest permanent church-office recognized in scripture, that whose primary function is to relieve want, and which is therefore designated by this very word, in Greek διάκονος, in English *deacon* (Phil. 1, 1. 1 Tim. 3, 8. 12.) In the case before us it is used in its generic sense of *servant* or *attendant* as opposed to master, but with special reference no doubt to the specific kind of service which the word (or its equivalent) would necessarily suggest, to wit, that of caring for the welfare and supplying the necessities of others. If any one wishes to be truly first, he must become so, not by caring for himself, but by ministering to the wants of others. It is impossible to overlook the fact that no allusion is here made to the priority of Peter, which must therefore have been temporary and conventional. For if he was in any other sense the first of the apostles, how could this dispute arise, or how could Christ avoid replying that the question, as to one of them at least, was already settled? There is not the slightest hint, however, that Peter was not equally involved with all the rest in this dispute about pre-eminence, nor any reason to except him from the operation of the rule here laid down, whether considered as a promise or a threatening. It may be said indeed that Peter's primacy is here provided for by showing how he must maintain it, and that in compliance with this rule his successor in the primacy is still called *servus servorum Dei*. But besides the later date and well-known origin of this arrogant humility in the contest for pre-eminence between the bishops of Rome and Constantinople at the close of the sixth century, the sense thus put upon our Saviour's precept is forbidden by its very terms, which are conditional but personally unrestricted. He does not say, If Peter wishes to be first, or to remain so, but if any (one) so wishes, thus throwing open the distinction equally to all who chose to use the necessary means of acquisition. On the other hand, considered as a warning, it was no less true of Peter than of Judas, that if he wished to be the first in any selfish or ambitious sense, he should be treated as *last of all and servant of all*.

36. And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them; and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them :

What he had thus taught in words he now illustrates by an emblematic action, not only admirably suited to his purpose, but affording a delightful glimpse of his personal habits and relations. *Taking a child*, the word so rendered in v. 24, which, although a diminutive in form, determines nothing as to age or size, which may however be conjectured from what follows. *Set*, or rather stood up, caused to stand. *Him*, literally *it*, the pronoun like its antecedent being of the

neuter form and common gender. *In the midst of them*, among them, and surrounded by them. *Taking in his arms*, the true sense of a single word in Greek, derived from a noun denoting the bent arm, and itself meaning to encircle or embrace therewith. This lovely trait, found only in Mark's picture, is a proof not only of our Lord's benignity in general, but of his love for children, here expressed in act as it elsewhere is in words (Matt. 19, 14.) By a harmless though dubious conjecture this pleasing incident may be invested with a still more personal and lifelike interest. As what is here recorded took place, not only in a house, but in the house, i. e. the one where he resided in Capernaum (see above, on v. 28); and as we have some ground for supposing this to be the house of Simon and Andrew (see above, on 1, 29); as the child here mentioned is not said to have been brought in from abroad, but appears to have been casually present as a member of the household; it is not impossible, or even improbable, that the little one, thus honoured by our Lord's caresses, was the child of one of his apostles.

37. Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

Having set the child before them as an emblematic model, he proceeds to give an oral explanation of its meaning. *Whosoever* (meaning nothing more nor less than the familiar form *whoever*) *shall receive*, in Greek a more contingent and conditional expression, for which we have no exact equivalent, but which may be correctly though inadequately rendered either *shall*, *may*, or *does receive*. *One*, emphatically, even *one*, *no more*, as if to state the minimum or lowest case supposable, in number no less than in quality. *Of such children* as the one before you, so young, so weak, so inexperienced, so insignificant to all appearance. *In my name*, or rather, *on my name*, an expression foreign to our idiom, but suggesting an important additional idea, over and above that of mere representation, namely, that of confidence, reliance, trust. ‘Whoever receives such a child as sent by me, and with unwavering reliance on me, as entitled so to send him and to require his appropriate reception.’ *Receiveth me*, i. e. in the person of the child and as represented by him. ‘If I send even such a child to represent me, its reception will be estimated by me just as if it were my own.’ The meaning and the ground of this are obvious enough; but the connection with what goes before is not so plain. It seems designed, however, to dispose of an objection which would naturally rise up in the minds of the disciples. ‘We are willing,’ they might well have said, ‘to renounce all personal distinction and pre-eminence; but what will then become of our official influence and representative authority as thy apostles? If each of us is trying to be last of all and servant of all, who will regard us or obey us as ambassadors for Christ?’ To this our Lord replies in substance, that their authority and influence in that capacity depended not upon their personal pretensions or as-

sumptions, but upon the power which commissioned them and which they represented, so that not only unpretending men, but an unpretending child, if duly accredited as his commissioner, must be received (in some sort) as himself, or if rejected by those to whom he came, must be rejected at their peril. *Not me but the (one) sending me,* the further application of the principle just laid down to himself and his commission from the Father. As if he had said, ‘this is not peculiar to your ministry but equally appropriate to mine. As the suitable reception of my representatives is virtually just such a reception of myself, so a suitable reception of myself is virtually just such a reception of my Father.’ Peculiar to this clause, however, is the strong negative, *receiveth not me,* which admits of two interpretations, or rather is suggestive of two harmonious but distinct ideas. The first is, he who receives me receives *not only* me but him who sent me. The other is, he who receives me receives me not as he now sees me, in appearance a mere man, but in my real character and nature, as co-equal and coessential with the Father who commissioned me. Far from militating therefore against Christ’s divinity, this clause contains a real though not obvious allusion to it.

38. And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him, because he followeth not us.

*John answered him*, i. e. continued the conversation, not by a direct reply to what had just been said, but by suggesting a topic closely connected with it, and belonging to the same great subject. (The Vatican and two other uncial manuscripts, together with the Syriac and Coptic versions, have simply, *said to him.*) *Master*, i. e. teacher, as opposed to learner or disciple, not to servant. *We*, the whole body of apostles, or perhaps John and James, when they were sent forth two and two. *Saw*, when or where is not recorded, but most probably when absent from their master, on their first apostolical mission. *One*, not a numeral, much less an emphatic one, as in the verse preceding, but an indefinite pronoun meaning *some (one)*, and perhaps implying that his name was unknown or forgotten or of no importance to the end for which the fact was stated. *Casting out devils*, dispossessing demons, in the exercise of similar authority and power to that conferred by Christ upon the twelve themselves. *In thy name*, i. e. claiming so to do by thy authority, and probably by actual invocation of the name of Jesus. *And he* (or according to the latest critics, *who*) *followeth not us*, by which he does not seem to signify dependence or inferiority, but mere association with the twelve in following Christ himself, as expressed in Luke’s report (*he followeth not with us.*) The repetition in the last clause is rejected by the latest critics, but on very insufficient grounds, and is more likely, even on their own rules, to have been omitted than inserted by the copyists of later date. We have here an instance of the natural but erroneous disposition to infer from the existence of a divinely instituted order, that its author can or will do

nothing to promote the same end independently of it. A much earlier example is that of Joshua in Num. 11, 28, and a similar mistake appears to have been permitted in the apostolic body for the purpose of providing a corrective, to be afterwards applied to all like cases, which are constantly occurring, even in relation to arrangements and institutions wholly human in their origin and destitute of all divine authority. But even where this does exist and constitute the general rule of human action, God reserves the right of acting independently of that rule, as asserted or explained in the ensuing verses.

39. But Jesus said, Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.

*Forbid him not*, as if the case were still an open one or not yet settled, which may seem to imply that the occurrence was not only recent but in progress. As it is not probable, however, that the twelve, or any of them, would have ventured upon such a prohibition in their master's presence or vicinity, it seems best, as before suggested, to refer this incident to the time when the apostles were sent forth upon their first official mission, and to understand our Lord's injunction here as simply calling up the past and speaking of it as the present, or still more simply as a general direction to be acted on in future, upon which hypothesis the pronoun (*him*) refers to any one performing the same acts or occupying the same position. The reason of the rule laid down is given in the other clause, as indicated by the *for*. *No man* (literally, *no one*) *shall* (or *will*) *do*, and by parity of reasoning has done or is doing now. *A miracle*, literally, a *power*, i. e. an effect of superhuman power as a proof of divine agency and approbation. *In my name*, upon my name, precisely as in v. 37 above. *That can*, literally, *and can*, i. e. there is no one who can do both. *Can*, or, more emphatically, *shall* (or *will*) *be able*, an independent verb in the future tense, which still includes all imaginable cases of the kind in question. *Lightly*, quickly, hastily, or readily, an instance of the figure called meiosis or litotes, as the meaning evidently is, not that he could perform the act, though reluctantly and after hesitation, but that he could not perform it at all. *Speak evil of me*, the same verb that is rendered *curse* in 7, 10, but more exactly here, as it includes all degrees of evil speaking from the direst imprecation to the mildest censure, and is here used to denote all oral expression of hostility, however gentle or however fierce. The essential idea is, he cannot be opposed to me, the act of speaking being mentioned only as the natural and usual expression of the inward dispositions and affections. Divested then of its peculiar form, the reason which the Saviour gives for not allowing his disciples to forbid the casting out of demons, or other miraculous performances of which they are a chosen specimen or representative, is that the miracles themselves were a more conclusive proof of a divine commission than mere association with the twelve could be. Although the age of miracles is past, and therefore no such case can

now arise, the principle involved is evidently pertinent to many other cases, and especially to that of spiritual influences visibly attending certain ministrations, and affording a more certain test of their validity than any mere ecclesiastical connection or commission. It is no objection to this application or extension of the principle here laid down, that apparent spiritual attestations may be spurious; for so might the miraculous appearances of old, and as the rule originally laid down was to be applied to none but genuine performances of that kind, so the rule as here extended is to be applied to none but genuine and valid proofs of the divine approval, to determine which is no part of our present task, though easily deducible from scripture and experience.

#### 40. For he that is not against us is on our part.

There is a singular variety of text in this verse, many copies reading *against you* and *for you*, some *against you* and *for us*, some *against us* and *for you*. The two last readings (those which have both the first and second person) change the sense entirely or rather convert it into nonsense, the distinction between *you* and *us* being perfectly irrelevant if not unmeaning. The one first mentioned (*you* and *you*) is supported by the greatest number of uncial manuscripts, but the common text (*us* and *us*) by those of most age and authority (including B and C, the famous Vatican and Paris copies.) There is, however, little choice between them as the sentence is proverbial, and the pronouns, whether of the first or second person, are descriptive not of certain classes, but of men in general, or of any parties who sustain or may sustain the mutual relations here supposed. *On our part* (or side), though a correct translation as to sense, impairs the beautiful antithesis of form in the original (*against us, for us.*) Like other proverbs, this exhibits only one phase or aspect of the truth expressed, to wit, that in a certain sense and to a certain length, the absence of hostility may be sufficient evidence of friendship. It is no less true, however, and therefore perfectly consistent with this saying, that in another sense, or under other circumstances, the neglect of positive co-operation is itself a proof of enmity. So far are these two aphorisms from being contradictory, that both may be exemplified in the experience of the very same persons. For example, Nicodemus, by refusing to take part with the Sanhedrim against our Lord, although he did not venture to espouse his cause, proved himself to be upon his side; but if he had continued the same course when the crisis had arrived, he would equally have proved himself to be against him. The pretence of inconsistency between the words of this verse and the saying recorded in Luke (9, 50), is therefore as absurd as such a charge would be against Solomon's twin maxims (Prov. 26, 4.5.) The meaning of the words before us evidently is, that the case proposed by John was one in which the maxim quoted would apply, however numerous the instances in which the very opposite might be affirmed. \*

#### 41. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to

drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

Instead of overlooking or ignoring such conclusive evidence of union with the Saviour as that furnished by the working of a miracle expressly in his name and in avowed reliance upon him, they ought rather to appreciate the slightest tokens of regard to him, even the most trifling acts of kindness to themselves on his account, as he himself would note, and as it were acknowledge, every such expression of attachment, even the most humble and intrinsically worthless. *For whosoever shall* (whoever may) *give to drink*, a single word in Greek, analogous to our verb *to water*, but derived from the noun *drink*, and applied both to plants (by Xenophon) and to men (by Plato.) From the same root comes the following noun, *cup*, or any drinking vessel, the same word that is used above in 7, 4. 8, and there explained. *A cup* (or *bowl*) *of water* is here mentioned as the cheapest of all bodily refreshments, and therefore suitable to represent the smallest acts of kindness done by man to man. *In my name*, or, according to the critics, *in name*, i. e. for the avowed reason, or expressly on the ground, *that ye are Christ's*, the phrase employed in the translation of 1 Cor. 3, 23, and at once more exact and more expressive than the one here given, though correct in sense, *because ye belong to Christ*. *Verily* (Amen) *I say unto you*, implying that what follows is a certain and a solemn truth. *He shall not*, a particularly strong form of negation, being that employed above in v. 1 and there explained. *His reward*, i. e. the benefit of such regard to Christ, proved by kindness to his followers. The doctrine of legal merit is no more involved in this expression than in the many passages which teach that men are to be dealt with in proportion to their works, although salvation is entirely gratuitous. The connection of this verse with that before it seems to be, that as Christ himself took notice of the slightest proofs of love to him, his followers ought not to overlook the greatest.

42. And whosoever shall offend one of (these) little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

Having answered John, the Saviour now resumes the thread of his discourse where John had broken it, and carries out still further the idea of v. 37, that they who represented him must be received as he would be received in person. This rule he had already there laid down in reference to his apostles, and by parity of reasoning to all his faithful ministers, so far as they officially do represent him. But he now proceeds in this direction to a greater and an almost startling length, by declaring the same thing to be true of all believers, even the weakest and the most despised. Reverting to the case before suggested of a little child, perhaps reminded of it by the real child still in his presence or his arms, he now declares the rights and the prerogatives belonging

to the humblest of his people. *Whosoever shall* (whoever may) *offend*, literally *scandalize*, the verb employed above in 4, 17. 6, 3, and there explained as primarily meaning to obstruct a person's path by snares or stumbling blocks, and then in a moral application to betray another into sin or error, either by precept or example, or in any other way conceivable. *One*, even one, the same emphatic usage of the numeral of which we have already had an instance in v. 37. *Of these* (literally, *the*) *little (ones)*, the *(ones) believing in me*, i. e. confiding in me as a Saviour. This may refer to children in the proper sense, but only as believers, and the weakest and most defenceless class of believers, who might therefore appear liable to be maltreated with impunity. But Christ himself is their protector, and denounces the severest doom on such as take advantage of their weakness to betray them into sin and error. As children, if referred to here, are only specified as being the most feeble and defenceless of believers, what is said of them is no less true of all who in these respects resemble them, whatever be their age; and thus we reach the same conclusion to which others come by understanding *little (ones)* in this verse, not of children, but of weak and humble Christians, who are certainly referred to, either indirectly or directly. The guilt and danger of scandalizing such, in the peculiar sense before explained, is here expressed with fearful emphasis, by saying of the person who commits this aggravated sin, that *it is better for him* (literally, *good for him rather*) *not that a millstone were hanged*, but *if a millstone hangs* (literally, *lies around*) *his neck and (not he were cast*, as a supposed case, but) *he has been cast* (as an accomplished fact) *into the sea*. The sense is clear, although the form of expression is exceedingly unusual, presenting two contingencies, or rather actual experiences, in the case of one and the same person, and comparing them; supposing on the one hand that he has offended, scandalized, a weak believer; on the other, that a millstone is around his neck and he already cast into the sea; and then declaring that of these two possibilities the latter is the better for him, i. e. for his interest or welfare, even if he is to perish. The moral or judicial sense of *more just*, more deserved, is equally consistent with the usage of the word, but not with its connection here; for with what is it compared, or in comparison with what is such an end pronounced to be more just or worthy? *A millstone*, either put for any heavy weight or as the very weight of old attached to convicts who were to undergo the punishment of *catalepsis* or submersion in the sea. The supposition that our Lord alludes directly to this practice, though intrinsically probable, is not essential to the force and beauty of this terrible denunciation, which is equally impressive and significant if understood of an imaginary case, or of a single real instance of such punishment. As to the connection with v. 37, this appears to be a wide step in advance of what is there affirmed, to wit, that he who refused to acknowledge even a mere child, sufficiently accredited as sent by Christ to represent him, will be punished as he would be for rejecting Christ himself. But more than this, he who even leads the weakest of be-

lievers, though without authority or office, into sin, would better have been lying at the bottom of the sea.

43. And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched.

By a perfectly natural and even obvious association of ideas, the Redeemer now proceeds still further in the same direction. Having warned his hearers, and especially the twelve, against the sin of scandalizing others, even the weakest and most helpless of believers, he now warns them no less solemnly against the risk of being scandalized themselves and by themselves, i. e. of being tempted and betrayed into sin by any thing belonging to themselves, however highly valued and however fondly cherished. This idea he expresses in a manner which may be described as characteristic of his teaching, i. e. by assuming an extreme case and supposing that a man's own members, even those which he particularly prizes, and to lose which would be little less than death itself, are incurable, incorrigible causes or occasions of transgression against God. The case is not presented as a real one, or one which there is reason to anticipate in actual experience; but if it should occur, if the only alternative presented to a man were deliberate habitual transgression or the loss of his most valuable members, what would be his choice? If he prefer his bodily integrity and purchase it at such a price, he has reason to believe himself a reprobate. But if in the extreme case here supposed, he would be ready to choose mutilation rather than a life of sin, that choice includes all minor cases, as the whole includes the part, and as the greater comprehends the less. This important lesson is conveyed by a series of ideal cases, differing chiefly in the member which the man is called to sacrifice in order to secure salvation, but in other respects gaining the same end by solemn repetition, so that each succeeding verse is like the chorus or burden of a funeral dirge. In the one before us, the antithesis presented is between the loss of one hand with salvation or admission into heaven, and the use of two hands with perdition or the everlasting pains of hell. This last idea is expressed by a Greek word made up of two Hebrew ones, originally meaning the *valley of Hinnom*. As a local designation, it described the valley on the south side of Jerusalem, famous of old as a favourite place of idolatrous worship, and especially of the horrid service paid to Moloch by causing children to pass through the fire (Lev. 18, 21. 20, 2. 2 Kings 23, 10. 2 Chr. 33, 6. Jer. 19, 2. 32, 35.) Hence in times of reformation, and especially under Josiah, the last good king of Judah, this valley was defiled, probably by being made a place of deposit for the refuse and offal of the city (2 Kings 23, 10.) It is often added that to consume this refuse fires were kept perpetually burning; but there is no sufficient evidence of this fact, and the latest writers suppose the sacrificial fires of Moloch to have given rise to the peculiar usage of the word *Gehenna*, to denote the place of future torment, or

what in modern English is called *hell*. *The fire, the unquenchable*, or unextinguished, a description borrowed from the fires already mentioned, but employed to represent the everlasting torments of the damned.

44. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

The terrific description is continued with a sort of fearful repetition, adding greatly to its solemn grandeur. *Where* (referring to Gehenna, as already mentioned in the verse preceding) *their worm* (i. e. the carcass-worm which preys upon the bodies of those burning there) *dieth not*, literally, *ends not*, ceases not to live, the same verb that is used above, in 7, 10, and there explained, but here suggesting the additional idea that the worm not only never dies, but never ends or interrupts its decomposing and devouring process. This terrific figure of an endless dissolution, an eternal putrefaction, is directly borrowed from Isaiah (66, 24), but more remotely from the fires of Tophet. *And the fire is not quenched*, a sort of poetical variation of the fire *unquenched* (a cognate form) in the preceding verse.

45. 46. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

The same supposition is then made as to the foot, and the same comparison or contrast between going lame or maimed into life (i. e. a state of future blessedness), or retaining both feet to be thrown or cast (a stronger term than that before used, and suggesting forcible not voluntary entrance) into hell (Gehenna), the fire unquenched or unquenchable, an epithet applied by Homer to undying fame, exhaustless strength, and by Æschylus (who strangely but sublimely confounds fire and water) to the ceaseless flow of ocean. Then follows without any change (in v. 46) the burden of Isaiah's melancholy song, the repetition of which gives it a new pathos, as applied still more explicitly by Christ to the eternal pains of human sufferers and sinners.

47. 48. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

The only change in this third strophe is the substitution of the eye in the first clause, of the corresponding terms, *one-eyed, having two eyes*, in what follows, and of the phrase *kingdom of heaven* for *eternal life*, here described as the final and eternal consummation of that very king-

dom, which our Lord was now erecting in the hearts of his disciples, and was soon to organize by their means, under the direction of his Spirit, in society and on the ruins or rather the unchangeable foundation of the ancient church. These changes, while they multiply the real yet ideal cases in which the alternative may be presented, also serve to render more impressive the reiteration of the phrases which remain unaltered, thus imparting to the passage a strophical or rhythmical form, which is essentially poetical, though free from the conventional restraint of rhyme or even of prosodial measure. This peculiar structure is among the oldest forms of composition extant, being found in the first cosmogony of Moses (Gen. 1, 1-2, 3), which, for this and other reasons, has been thought by some to be a relic of primeval composition, handed down perhaps from Adam through a few intervening links to Moses, and incorporated by him in his history, or placed before it as a still more ancient text or theme, but under the divine direction and the same unerring seal of inspiration. However this may be, there is something most impressive in our Lord's adoption of this measured prose, which unlike ordinary poetry, may live through any number of translations, and was possibly intended in the present case, as in the older one just mentioned, to impress these solemn warnings on the memory of those who heard but never read them. If this may be assumed, the passage furnishes an interesting glimpse of his peculiar *didache* or mode of teaching, in addition to the others which have been already noticed.

49. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

This is one of the most difficult passages in the whole book, both the meaning of the terms and the connection with what goes before being doubtful and obscure. Among the various interpretations which have been proposed, one or two points seem to be agreed upon, which may therefore be first stated as a basis for determining the other questions. It is commonly admitted that the last clause of this verse is an allusion to, if not a direct quotation from the law of sacrifice in Lev. 2, 13, from the Septuagint version of which it differs only by the change of *gift* to *sacrifice*, a term used in the older classics to denote the sacrificial act or service, but in later Greek extended to the sacrificial victims, or the animals admitted to the altar. It is also agreed that there is allusion to the antiseptic and conservative effects of salt, and that these are figuratively transferred to fire. But what fire is meant, and in what sense it is conservative, and how the whole verse is related to what goes before and follows, these are questions as to which there is a great diversity of judgment. The different hypotheses entitled to attention may, however, be reduced to two, essentially distinguished by the fact that one of them regards this as a promise, and the other as a threatening or a warning. According to the former view, our Lord, referring to the well known requisition of the law already mentioned, that every sacrificial victim must be salted, that is, rubbed or

sprinkled with salt, and also to the universal association between salt and soundness or purity of meats, avails himself of these associations to assure his hearers, that every one whom God approves, or towards whom he has purposes of mercy, though he may pass through the fire of persecution and affliction, including the painful self-denial recommended in the previous context, will be purified and saved thereby, or as an offering to God, salted with such fire, just as the literal sacrifice was salted at the altar. This is certainly a good sense in itself, and favoured by the strong analogy of the fiery trial which Peter mentions in his first epistle (4, 12.) The objections to it are, that it gives to *fire* a sense entirely different from that in the preceding context, and that it does not explain the logical connection indicated by the *for*. The other explanation supposes the connection to be this. Our Lord had six times spoken of eternal torments as *unquenchable fire*, from which no man could escape without self-denial and the mortification of sin. The immediately preceding verse concludes with the solemn repetition of that fearful saying, *where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched*, i. e. their sufferings are endless and unceasing. But how can the subject of such sufferings escape annihilation? By being kept in existence for the very purpose of enduring them. This awful fact he clothes in a figurative form derived from the sacrificial ritual of Moses. Every victim must be rubbed with salt, the symbol of incorruption and preservation. So these victims shall be salted, not with salt but fire. The divine wrath that consumes them will preserve them, i. e. from annihilation, not from suffering, but for suffering. It is no objection to this view of the passage that it takes salt in a sense not justified by usage, which requires it to mean preservation for a good end or salvation. This is a mere assumption just as easy to deny as to affirm. The essential idea of the figure is preservation from destruction, or continued existence, and may just as well be used both in a good and a bad sense, as leaven (which the law excluded from all offerings no less strictly than it required salt) is used in both (see above, on 8, 15). and just as we might say that the *lost* sinner will be *saved* from annihilation, although not from ruin. On the other hand, this interpretation has the advantage of continuing the train of thought unbroken, taking fire in the same sense as throughout the previous context, and concluding this terrific warning in a manner far more appropriate than a promise of salvation by the fire of suffering, however pleasing and delightful in itself.

50. Salt (is) good, but if the salt have lost his saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

According to the first interpretation given of v. 49, this must be taken as a sudden change of figure or in the meaning of the figure there used. Salt, which there denotes the conservative or purifying virtue of affliction, now means heavenly grace or wisdom which the disciples are enjoined to cherish in their own hearts. This is certainly

a violent transition, not to be assumed without necessity, and furnishing a strong ground of preference for any exegetical hypothesis by which it is dispensed with. This is effected by the other explanation, which supposes this to be an answer to the very difficulty raised before as to the use of salt in an unusual and unfavourable sense. He had said that every victim to the wrath of God would be salted by the fire of that wrath, i. e. preserved in existence for the purpose of enduring it. But salt, they might have said, as some say now, can only signify a salutary preservation, as in the sacrificial law referred to, it denotes something good, not evil. With his usual method of converting objections into arguments or motives, he concedes the truth of the premises involved in this one. *Salt is good*, not only in itself, but as a figure for moral purity and conservation; that is the true salt, which every one should have within him, namely, moral purity and right affections. *But if the salt becomes unsalted*, a most lively and intelligible figure for the loss of moral goodness and descriptive of men's natural condition since the fall, *wherewith*, literally, *in what*, i. e. in the use of what means (see above, on v. 29) *will you season it*, a Greek word always implying management, contrivance, art, and in the later classics used as a culinary term, exactly answering to *season*. ‘How will you manage or contrive to restore its savor or saltiness?’ It is implied that such a process is impossible, i. e. to man himself or any other finite power. The salt of moral goodness is a fine thing where it is possessed; but when it is corrupted, it is worse than useless, and the man who has thus lost it has but one alternative. He must either be salted with the fire of divine wrath and his own eternal torments, or with the renewed salt of divine grace and his own regeneration. Immortality, without the hope of blessedness, which gives it all its value, can be only an eternity of wretchedness. Here then the bright or cheering side of the whole subject is presented, not by violent transition but by natural association, introducing easily the following exhortation. *Have salt in yourselves*, i. e. take heed that the principle of conservation, which is to secure your endless being, is not that of wrath and justice and punishment ab extra, but that of grace and goodness in yourselves. It is not the method of salvation that is here presented, but the bare fact that in order to secure it men must have a principle of life within them, and the scriptures abundantly teach elsewhere, that this principle can only be implanted by divine grace, through the operation of the Holy Spirit. By a perfectly natural but masterly recoil, he then reverts in conclusion to the circumstance which led to this remarkable discourse, their strife for the pre-eminence, and exhorts them to demonstrate their possession of this spiritual salt, which is to save them from the salt of everlasting fire, by cherishing that peace among themselves (literally, in one another) which is elsewhere so expressly represented as among the invariable “fruits of the Spirit.” (Gal. 5, 22. Eph. 5, 9.)

## CHAPTER X.

MARK now records, in chronological order, a series of incidents belonging to a journey of our Saviour in Perea, or beyond the Jordan, which we have reason, drawn from other sources, to regard as his last journey to Jerusalem. In reply to an insidious question of the Pharisees, he lays down the Christian law of marriage and divorce (1-12.) On the same or a subsequent occasion, he declares the rights of children and pronounces a blessing on them (13-16.) To one who seeks eternal life, but in his own right, Christ applies a double test, thereby exposing his true character (17-22.) This leads him to enlarge upon the dangers incident to wealth, and the obstructions to salvation thence arising (23-27.) As a counterpart to this, and in immediate application to his first disciples, he declares the recompense of those renouncing all for his sake (28-31.) Continuing his journey to Jerusalem, he again foretells his betrayal to the Jews and Gentiles, and his maltreatment by them, ending in his death and resurrection (32-34.) He is still so far from being understood, that James and John request conspicuous positions under his temporal reign which they believe to be approaching (35-40.) This ambitious prayer excites the jealous indignation of the rest, which he allays by declaring the true nature of his kingdom, and by holding up to them his own example (41-45.) In the last stage of his journey to Jerusalem, he heals a blind man with accompanying circumstances of a novel and affecting kind, on account of which it is recorded in detail (46-52.) Here again we find the narrative not only flowing and coherent but progressive, that is, visibly tending to the crisis or catastrophe of this whole history, and marked by regular advances, both of time and place.

1. And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea by the farther side of Jordan; and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.

This verse is descriptive, not of an ordinary removal from one place to another (as in 9, 30), but of our Lord's final departure from Galilee to close his ministry and life in Judea. *And thence*, i. e. from Capernaum, the last place mentioned (see above, on 9, 33), and here referred to as the centre of his Galilean ministry, now about to terminate. *Arising*, starting, setting out (as in 7, 24), but here peculiarly significant, because denoting the commencement of his last official journey. *Coasts*, borders, frontiers, often put for the whole territory bounded by them (see above, on 5, 17. 7, 31.) *By the further side*, literally, *through the Beyond-Jordan*, that phrase having acquired the force of a proper name equivalent to the *Perea* of the Greek geographers. The natural meaning of the clause is that he travelled to Judea, not directly through Samaria, but circuitously through Perea, possibly for

greater safety, but more probably because that region had been hitherto less favoured with his presence and instructions. It may even be that on this final departure from his accustomed field of labour, he deliberately took an irregular or winding course on both sides of the river, so as to touch as many points as possible. (Compare Luke 9, 51, the precise chronological relations of which passage belong to the exposition of that gospel.)

2. And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away (his) wife? tempting him.

Mark now resumes the history of the systematic opposition of the dominant party, not by mere reiteration of facts absolutely similar to those before related, but by exhibiting a new phase or aspect of the anti-christian movement. The tactics of the enemy had hitherto consisted in objecting to his conduct, or to that of his disciples, with respect to the alleged violations of the law. But now, instructed by experience, or advised by wiser leaders, they adopt the more insidious method of demanding his opinion upon doubtful and vexed questions, which were then the subject of exciting controversy, and which it seemed impossible to answer either way, without giving offence and incurring danger in some influential quarter. This new mode of opposition was continued until near the close of our Lord's history, and affords many striking illustrations of the cunning of his enemies and of his own consummate wisdom. The first of these attacks was on the difficult and much disputed question of divorce. *The Pharisees*, or according to the latest critics, *Pharisees*, without the article, denoting members of that wide-spread party, who encountered him on this last journey from Galilee and east of Jordan. *Coming to him*, for the purpose, not in private but in public, as he taught the people (v. 1.) *Asked*, interrogated, questioned him. *Is it lawful*, literally, *if* (or *whether*) *it is lawful*, expressed in Greek by an impersonal verb, the root or theme of (*ἐγοντία*) the noun meaning authority or delegated power. The verb here means, permitted by divine authority, or in accordance with the law of Moses (see above, on 2, 24. 26. 3, 4. 6, 18.) *His wife*, literally, *a woman*, corresponding to *a man*, the only words in common use for wife and husband, a remarkable and perhaps a characteristic difference, distinguishing the Greek and French from the Latin and English idiom. The specific sense is here determined by the context. *To put away*, dismiss, or let go, a verb which has repeatedly occurred before in other applications (see above, on 6, 36. 45. 8, 3. 9.) *Tempting*, i. e. trying him, putting him to the test. According to the Jewish traditions, it was even then a controverted question, between the schools of Hillel and Shammai, whether the obscure phrase in Deut. 24, 1, translated *some uncleanness*, but literally meaning *nakedness of word* (or *thing*), was to be taken in a moral sense as signifying lewdness, or in the vague sense of something disagreeable. The latter doctrine (that of Hillel) is said to have been afterwards carried by the famous Rabbi Akiba so far as to allow a man to put away his wife on

finding one who pleased him better. The question here proposed to Jesus was a trying one, because an affirmative answer might subject him to the charge of lax morality, and a negative one to that of disrespect for the authority of Moses.

3. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

*But he answering,* responding promptly to their cunning and malignant question; for the notion that they merely asked for information, or from curiosity to know how the new and famous teacher would decide such points, is utterly at variance with the tenor of the history, in which we have already seen the traces of a systematic and progressive opposition, one of the marked gradations being found just here. Instead of entering into their vexed questions and minute distinctions, he appeals at once to the law and the testimony, and requires them to recite the provision made by Moses for such cases, not as settling the difficulty, but as presenting the true *status quæstionis*, which was not what the Scribes taught or the Pharisees practised, but what Moses meant and God permitted.

4. And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorce, and to put (her) away.

In reply to this question they correctly state the substance of the law still extant in Deut. 24, 1-3. *Suffered*, a verb originally meaning to *turn over upon*, then to turn over to, commit, intrust, and lastly to permit, which is its usual sense in the Greek of the New Testament. *A bill*, book, or writing, of whatever size, the Greek word properly denoting the material (the inner bark of the papyrus), as the corresponding Hebrew one (employed by Moses) does the act of writing, or the fact that it was written on. The meaning here is evidently that of a certificate or testimonial, either of the bare fact of repudiation, or of her having been repudiated for some lesser cause than conjugal infidelity. This last may seem at variance with the phrase used by Moses and already mentioned (see above, on v. 3), which is commonly understood to mean unchaste behaviour. But in that case the law inflicted severe punishment (Num. 5. 31), which would exclude the peaceable divorce provided for in Deuteronomy.

5. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart, he wrote you this precept.

Having brought them back from their own subtle reasonings and nice distinctions to the letter of the law, he now interprets it, "as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (1, 22.) Of this interpretation two views have been taken, each of which admits of being plausibly defended. The first is that Christ here represents this law

of Moses as a temporary relaxation of the original divine law of marriage, in concession to the obstinate resistance (or *hardheartedness*) of the chosen people. This is perhaps the more obvious construction, as it seems to have prevailed so commonly. The objection to it is the very serious one that it represents the law of Moses as expressly warranting what was wrong and offensive in the sight of God, and for the very reason that seems to call for stringent prohibition. (Compare the words of Paul in 1 Tim. 1. 9.) This difficulty is diminished, if not wholly done away, by explaining *hardheartedness*, not of the general opposition of the people to the will of God, but of their harshness and unkindness to their wives when they divorced them, either as actually practised or as certainly foreseen at the giving of the law in question, which is therefore here described as given, not *for* but *to* (i. e. adapted to) the hardness of their hearts, and intended to restrain or mitigate its bad effects. The difference between the two interpretations is the difference between a law legitimating such divorces as the Jews had practised from the earliest times, and one requiring them in all such cases to provide the repudiated wife with a certificate of character. *Written*, in the literal sense, *recorded*, which implies a previous enactment, or in the secondary sense, *prescribed*, enjoined, denoting the enactment itself. *This precept*, or particular command, as distinguished from the *law* or aggregate of all such precepts.

## 6. But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female.

According to the first view above given of our Saviour's meaning (in v. 5), this verse distinguishes the primary or original law of marriage from its modification in the law of Moses. According to the other, it simply states the law of marriage as it was from the beginning and still remained unmodified and unrepealed. *From the beginning of the creation*, not in reference to the order of the creation itself, for that of man was last not first, but in reference to every thing of later date, *from the beginning of the* (world, i. e. its) *creation*. Or the same sense may be gained by limiting *creation* to the origin of man himself, from the beginning of the human race, or when man was created. *God made them male and female*, i. e. he created one pair, and united them in marriage, thereby excluding all polygamy, and at the same time giving this relation the precedence over every other, not excepting the parental and filial, as expressly stated in the next verse.

## 7. 8. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh ; so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

These are the words of Adam as recorded in Gen. 2, 24, and are therefore not a precept but a prophecy or a statement of what would be the natural and necessary consequence of marriage, namely, that it

would of course supersede the filial and all other previous relations. *For this cause*, not because God made them male and female, but referring to the context in Genesis, because Eve was taken out of Adam and was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, *therefore* (or for this cause) *shall a man leave his father and mother*, not as a necessary duty in all cases even of marriage, but as the natural and usual result, *and shall cleave unto his wife*, or be incorporated and identified with her, *so that they are no more two but one flesh*, not united merely in affection or in spirit, but in body or in the whole person.

### 9. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Thus far our Lord might seem to have been arguing against polygamy and not divorce; but he now makes such an application of his previous statements as completely meets the present case by declaring it unlawful for man to separate (or violently sever) that which God himself has joined together. In other words, marriage being not a human but a divine institution, and coeval with the race itself, cannot be nullified or even modified by any authority inferior to that which first created it.

### 10. And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same (matter).

*In the house*, or according to the latest text, *into the house*, a pregnant or elliptical construction, more distinctly suggestive of their previous entrance than the common reading. *Again* has reference to the previous question of the Pharisees (in v. 2.) *The same* (thing or matter), i. e. the lawfulness of divorce. This renewal of the question by his own disciples shows how much they were surprised by his absolute unqualified denunciation of a practice so familiar and so confidently founded on the law of Moses.

### 11. 12. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her; and if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

*He says to them*, his disciples, what he had said before to his opponents, but in terms still stronger because more explicit and direct. They are indeed so clear as neither to require nor admit of explanation. They are also carefully repeated in relation to both sexes, though the Jewish law and usage recognized no right of divorce except upon the husband's side. *Put away*, therefore, in v. 12 must either be explained to mean desertion by the wife (compare 1 Cor. 7, 12, 13), which only differs from divorce in the absence of the legal

form, or understood as a prospective regulation, not confined, in form or substance, to the Jewish practice. This absolute prohibition of divorce is still maintained in the Church of Rome, while the Protestant and Oriental churches qualify it by the exceptions recorded in Matt. 19, 9. 1 Cor. 7, 15, which some consider as involved in Mark's account, because the violation of the marriage vow by either party is itself a dissolution of the marriage relation, which ought not to be regarded as still binding on the other. Even in Matthew, the case of fornication or adultery is mentioned rather as a matter of course, which every one would take for granted, than as a formal exception needing to be separately stated.

13. And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and (his) disciples rebuked those that brought (them.)

*They*, indefinitely, some persons otherwise unknown, or more specifically, the parents or friends of the children (see above, on 8, 22). *Young* is not expressed in the original, unless it be by the diminutive form of the noun (*παιδία*), which however is elsewhere rendered simply *children* (e. g. 7, 28. 9, 27.) The translation may have reference to the stronger term (*βρέφη*) employed by Luke (18, 15), and correctly rendered *infants*. The imposition of hands, a natural sign of transfer, and often used in miraculous healings to connect the source and object of the gift, is here employed to express the general idea of blessing. There is no need of supposing any superstitious notion of a magical efficacy in the touch, although such errors may have been indulged by some. It is probable, however, that the greater number, in making this request, had reference to the use of the same form in sacrifice and benediction from the patriarchal times (Gen. 48, 14. Lev. 1, 4. 16, 21.) *Rebuked those bringing them*, an explanation of the more ambiguous terms employed by Matthew (19, 13) and Luke (18, 15), which might seem to mean that they rebuked the children themselves. This prohibition need not be ascribed to envy or moroseness on the part of the disciples, but was rather owing to a mistaken though sincere regard for their master's honour or convenience, and an officious sense of their own importance as his friends and followers.

14. But when Jesus saw (it), he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.

*But Jesus seeing it was much displeased*, a verb which, according to its etymology, as commonly explained, denotes great pain of mind or body, but especially the former, and may here be considered as including the ideas of grief and indignation (see below, on 14, 4, and compare Matt. 20, 24. 26, 8. Luke 13, 14.) *To them*, the disciples, who had un-

dertaken to exclude the children. *Suffer*, permit, strictly, let alone (see above, on 1, 34. 5, 19. 37. 7, 12. 27.) *Little children*, the same word that is rendered *young children* in the verse preceding. *Forbid*, by word or act, the Greek verb meaning to deter, hinder, or prevent in any way. *Of such* may either mean of children, or of those resembling children. Some, adhering to the strict sense of this word, and understanding the phrase *kingdom of God* as denoting heaven or a state of future blessedness, understand the clause as meaning that the most of those who shall be saved are children, because the greater portion of the human race dies in infancy, and all such are redeemed. But this sense is far from being either obvious or relevant in this connection, where the reference seems not so much to numbers as to character. Accordingly some understand the clause as meaning that the kingdom of God, or the enjoyment of his favour, here and hereafter, belongs to children (who believe) no less than to adult believers (see above, on 9, 42.) A third interpretation explains *such* as meaning *such-like*, those resembling them in character, i. e. in freedom from those sins of which children, though depraved by nature, are incapable from inexperience or from undeveloped intellect and passion, which the same interpreters suppose to be the meaning of our Lord in Matt. 18, 3. 4 (see above, on 9, 36. 42.) More satisfactory than any one of these hypotheses, because combining what is true in all of them, is Calvin's explanation of the sentence as referring both to children (i. e. to believing children) and to those who are like them in their childlike qualities, or as Paul expresses it, children not in understanding but in malice (1 Cor. 14, 20.)

15. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

This appears to have been one of our Lord's gnomes or maxims which he threw out upon different occasions, and which are therefore found in different connections in the history. This aphoristic character is indicated partly by the *Amen* (or *Verily*) *I say to you*, prefixed to it. *Shall not* (may not, does not) *receive* (i. e. accept, consent to enter or belong to) *the kingdom of God*, or the relation of subjects to God in Christ as their immediate sovereign, *as a child*, i. e. with the simplicity and docility natural to children, and with childlike freedom from ambition, avarice, and other sins peculiar to mature age. *Shall* (may or can) *not enter into it* (the kingdom before mentioned), and as a necessary consequence, or rather an equivalent expression, cannot be saved.

16. And he took them up in his arms, put (his) hands upon them, and blessed them.

*And embracing them*, or folding them in his arms, the same affectionate gesture that is mentioned in 9, 36, and denoted by the same Greek word, though otherwise expressed in English. *Putting the hands upon them*, thereby showing that the request for him to do so

was not superstitious or absurd (see above, on v. 13.) *Blessed them*, in the twofold sense of praying for them as a man, and of answering his own prayers as a divine person (see above, on 6, 41. 8, 7.) The application of this passage to infant-baptism, although scornfully rejected as absurd by its opponents, is entirely legitimate, not as an argument, but as an illustration of the spirit of the Christian system with respect to children. Every reader must determine for himself whether those who sneer at "baby-sprinkling," and repudiate as folly the bare thought of a child's partaking of that sacrament, are more like the disciples who rebuked the children or their friends on this occasion, or like him who said, *Forbid them not!*

17. And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

*And he travelling forth into the way*, i. e. setting out afresh upon his journey, showing that this is a connected narrative, and not a series of detached incidents thrown together at random, or because of their mutual affinity, without regard to chronological order. *Running up or to (him)*, as a sign of eagerness and haste. *One*, not the indefinite pronoun (*τις*) sometimes so translated, but the numeral adjective (*εἷς*) properly so rendered, and here used emphatically to denote a single person, not forming part of the surrounding multitude, perhaps with some allusion to his rank, which was that of a ruler (Luke 18, 18.) *Kneeling*, as a token of profound respect and earnest supplication, probably sincere, as he is not accused of tempting Christ like the Pharisees (in v. 2), and what follows shows him to have been an honest though erroneous and self-righteous seeker after truth and life. *Good master* (i. e. teacher), *what shall I do?* the question afterwards propounded by those who were converted on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2, 31), but here materially qualified by what is added. *That I may inherit*, i. e. possess in my own right, eternal life, salvation, everlasting happiness.

18. And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? (there is) none good but one, (that is) God.

The translators have here happily dispensed with their favourite expression, *no man* (see above, on 9, 35. 39), and thereby avoided a gross solecism, *no man except God*. The Greek word exactly corresponds to *no one*, being compounded of the negative particle (*οὐ*) and the numeral (*εἷς*), which occurs in the preceding verse and in the last clause of this. But a very important question here arises in relation to the meaning of our Saviour's language. The question (*why callest thou me good?*) implies reproof, and by itself might seem to be a mere correction of the light and thoughtless way in which such

titles of respect are given. But this construction is precluded by the other clause, which would in that case be entirely irrelevant if not unmeaning. Some of the fathers, followed by many modern interpreters, explain it as an intimation of our Lord's divinity. Why call me good, unless you own me to be God, for none is good but God? But this would be not only an obscure and indirect mode of announcing that great truth, but quite irrelevant and unconnected with the previous context. It would also imply what is not true, to wit, that the epithet *good*, though absolutely applicable only to the Most High, may not, in a lower sense, be lawfully applied to others (as it is in Matt. 12. 35. 25. 21. Luke 23. 50. Acts 11. 24. Rom. 5. 7.) The only way in which these objections can be met is by supposing an allusion in the word *good*, twice employed by Christ himself, to the same word twice occurring in the ruler's question, as preserved by Matthew (19. 16), *Good master, what good shall I do?* The meaning of the answer then may be as follows: 'You ask what good you are to do, and come to me as a teacher of good, able to inform you; but on that ground, why not go to God at once? He alone is absolutely good, and his will is the rule of good to all his creatures; and that will is expressed in his commandments,' which he then refers to more expressly in the next verse. The goodness of our Lord himself, and his divinity, are then not at all in question, and are consequently neither affirmed nor denied.

19. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

*The commandments thou knowest*, i. e. the written precepts which make up the law as the revealed will of God. This is a direct continuation of the answer in the other verse, and is equivalent to saying, 'Why come to me as a teacher or revealer of good, to ask what you are to do, when God's commandments are already upon record for the very purpose?' He then recites, not all the ten commandments, but those belonging to the second table and prescribing the duty of man to man. Those of the first table, or the duties of man to God, are omitted, not, as some suppose, because included in the declaration that God alone is good, but because they would not furnish so decisive a test for self-examination, since a man may imagine that he fears and loves God, but he cannot imagine that he loves his neighbour if he robs or murders him, or bears false witness against him. The order of the decalogue is disregarded either by Christ himself or the evangelist, as unimportant to his present purpose, the seventh commandment standing first, then the sixth, then the eighth, ninth, and tenth, and last of all the fifth, because, as some suppose, the ruler was deficient in this duty, but more probably, as others think, because it is a positive commandment and the others are all negative. *Defraud not* (or *deprive not*) is by some regarded as a separate citation from Lev. 19. 13, but is far more probably a summary abbreviation of the tenth commandment, which alone is

wanting to complete the second table, and is here immediately preceded by the eighth and ninth.

20. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

This is not to be regarded as a hypocritical profession, but an honest expression of the man's belief that he had actually kept the law, and wanted something more to do in order to inherit (or secure a rightful claim to) everlasting life or blessedness. This does not argue any disposition to deceive, but only an extremely superficial and inadequate conception of the meaning and extent of the divine law, as requiring perfect and perpetual obedience, and extending to the thoughts, dispositions, and affections, no less than the outward actions. *Observed*, literally, watched or guarded, which is the primary meaning of our English verb to *keep*, applied in the same manner. *From my youth*, a relative expression which, like that in 9, 21, proves nothing as to the precise age of the ruler, who is called a young man or a youth by Matthew (19, 22.)

21. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest ; go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven ; and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

*Then*, literally, *and* or *but* ( $\delta\epsilon$ ), *beholding*, looking at or on him. It has been much disputed what could be the object of the Saviour's love to this self-righteous ruler. Some say his sincerity and earnest wish to know his duty ; some his real rectitude and innocence of life, without which he could not have been so far deceived. Most probably, however, love, as in many other places, here denotes not moral approbation, nor affection founded upon any thing belonging to the object, but a sovereign and gratuitous compassion, such as leads to every act of mercy upon God's part (compare John 3, 16. Gal. 2, 20. Eph. 2, 4. 1 John 4, 10, 19.) The sense will then be, not that Jesus loved him on account of what he said, or what he was, or what he did, but that having purposes of mercy towards him, he proceeded to unmask him to himself, and to show him how entirely groundless although probably sincere, was his claim to have habitually kept the law. The Saviour's love is then mentioned, not as the effect of what precedes, but as the ground or motive of what follows. *One thing thou lackest*, literally *one thing is behindhand* (wanting or deficient) *to thee*. What this one thing is, he then informs him by the exhortation or command that follows. *Go thy way* (in modern English *go away*), i. e. at once, and do what I shall now enjoin upon thee. *Thou shalt have treasure in heaven* may seem out of place in this practical direction and severe requisition ; but it is equivalent to saying, sell and distribute what thou

hast, expecting no return or compensation in the present life, but only in the future; so that instead of lessening it exaggerates the rigour of the requisition. *Come, literally, hither* (see above, on 4, 19), *follow me* (become my follower or personal attendant), *taking up the cross* (of suffering and self-denial.) This has been misunderstood by thousands and for ages, as a general command to Christians, or an evangelical advice to such as wish to gain a supererogatory merit by doing more than the law requires, directing them to give up their possessions as the one thing necessary to perfection. This is the foundation of the vow of poverty common to almost all monastic institutions, and of the disposition to regard wealth as sinful which is sometimes found in other quarters. This opinion, plausible as it may seem, and efficacious as it has been, really involves three fallacies, each fatal to its truth. The first is, that our Lord admits the fact that this man had done all that was commanded, and proceeds to tell him one thing more required to make him perfect; the second, that this one thing was the mere renunciation of his property; the third, that the requisition to renounce it was a universal one intended for all wishing to inherit everlasting life. The sacrifice required was not the one thing lacking, but the proof of it. The one thing lacking was not something to be superadded to the keeping of the law, but something the defect of which showed that he had not kept the law at all. It was willingness to give up all for God, when its possession became inconsistent with his service. Without this, the observance of the law was worthless, or rather it had no existence. The reserve or deficiency in this case had respect to the advantages of wealth, which this man perhaps honestly expected to combine, not only with the keeping of the law, but with the performance of some extra-meritorious act which would secure to him the heritage or portion of eternal life. Instead of naming any such condition, Christ requires him to abandon what he knew to be his idol, and the man at once perceives the deficiency of his obedience. Had his ruling passion been the love of pleasure or of power, a corresponding test would have been chosen. Multitudes would give up wealth, if suffered to retain some other object of supreme affection. Multitudes have actually done so, by monastic vows or otherwise, whose hearts were still enslaved by some other selfish unsubdued affection. In opposition to the errors which have now been mentioned, three points may be stated: 1. Our Lord, far from conceding this man's claim to have kept the law all his life, here shows him that his boasted obedience had been destitute of something which was absolutely necessary, not to its perfection merely, but to its having any worth at all. 2. Instead of stating this deficiency in general terms, as the want of that supreme devotion and entire submission to the will of God which will dispose men to abandon any thing for his sake, he simply and at once requires him to abandon what he knew to be his idol, thus convincing him, not merely of a theoretical or doctrinal proposition, but of his own practical deficiency and destitution of the one thing needful to a full and meritorious obedience. 3. This requisition was a personal test, and not a general rule of duty, being applicable only where the object

of idolatrous attachment is the same, but taking other forms in reference to other objects. Here again we have a fine example of our Saviour's paradoxical method of instruction, by presenting extreme cases and determining by what men are prepared to do in such cases, though they may never occur in actual experience, what they will do in others of a more ordinary and familiar nature. This effect would be destroyed by converting the extreme case into a constant universal rule, which is just as unreasonable as it would be to convert the proposition, that every true believer must be ready to endure the pains of martyrdom rather than deny Christ, into a specific precept that every Christian must become a martyr, as an indispensable condition of salvation, or that by so doing any Christian may attain a supererogatory merit, even above that of obeying the divine law. It is one of the most striking facts in the history of the church, that this delusion as to martyrdom did really prevail in the age of persecution, and was followed by the other, as to voluntary poverty, in what may be described as the age of wealth and luxury.

22. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved ; for he had great possessions.

Whether the ruler fully understood the reasoning involved in our Lord's reply or not, he seems at least to have felt its application to himself, i. e. he felt that he could not do what Christ required, and could not therefore maintain his boast of perfect submission to the will of God. For though he may not have admitted the right of this "good teacher" to exact of him so terrible a sacrifice, he must have felt that even if he had the right, his own heart was incapable of such obedience. So completely was he silenced by this consciousness, and by the fearful probing which produced it, that he seems to have withdrawn without attempting any self-defence or refutation of the Saviour's doctrine. *And he, being (or becoming) sad,* an expressive Greek term elsewhere applied to the gloomy aspect of a lowering day (Matt. 16, 3.) *At (or for, on account of) the word (or saying),* i. e. what the Saviour had just said in answer to his own demand, and which he therefore could not decently complain of, though unable to receive it. *He went away grieved,* because his proud (though earnest and sincere) hope of inheriting eternal life was crushed by this most unexpected and impossible condition, *for he had,* literally *was having,* an expression foreign from our idiom but suggesting the idea of continued or habitual as well as actual possession. Though a young man (Matt. 19, 22), he was not a mere expectant but had come into possession of his property, which may perhaps throw light upon the form of his inquiry, how he could *inherit* everlasting life. *Many possessions,* may simply mean much property, or more specifically various kinds of wealth. Upon the further history and final destiny of this young man the Scriptures, as in many other cases, drop the veil, and the question of his fate is left to the conjectures of interpreters, which vary with their tempers, or perhaps from accidental causes. Calvin thinks it more probable that he

continued as he was. The modern Germans lean the other way, as some of them have hopes, not only for Simon Magus, but for Judas Iscariot. The mere silence of the history proves nothing, as the Bible contains few biographical details that have not a historical or public interest. Even the patriarchs withdraw from view as soon as they cease to be actors in the scene, though long before the end of life. As Adam and Eve, the guilty source of our apostasy, are almost universally believed to have been saved, notwithstanding the silence of the sacred record, so the same presumption may be warrantably raised in other less conspicuous and noted cases. In the one before us, there is a positive though slight hint of a favourable issue, in the statement made by Mark alone, that Jesus loved him, which, as we have seen, most probably denotes that he had purposes of mercy towards him, and in this conclusion it is pleasing, since it is allowable, to rest.

23. And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God !

*Looking round*, a gesture elsewhere noted in this gospel (see above, on 3, 5. 34. 5, 32), here designed to call attention to the painful but salutary lesson taught by the example of the man who had just left them. *How hardly*, with what difficulty, i. e. in the face of what obstructions and impediments. The phrase has reference, not to the sufficiency of God's grace, which is equal in all cases because infinite, but to the hinderances with which the man himself must struggle, and which nothing but that grace can overcome. *Those having riches*, a Greek noun originally meaning what is used or needed, but commonly employed in the plural (Acts 4, 37 is an exception) to denote property, and particularly money. (Compare *funds* and *means* in modern English.) This usage gives our Lord's words a wider application than if limited to those possessing wealth or riches, although these are no doubt especially intended, as peculiarly in danger. *Into the kingdom of God shall enter*, i. e. become his faithful subjects here, and enjoy his royal favour hereafter, all which is summed up in the usual expression, 'shall be saved.'

24. And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God !

*Astonished*, filled with consternation and amazement. *But Jesus again answering*, not merely saying, which is never the full meaning of this verb, but either continuing, resuming, saying further, or more strictly still, responding to their thoughts though not expressed in words. *Children*, an affectionate expression indicating an intention to relieve and comfort rather than alarm them. *How hard*, the adjective

from which the adverb in v. 23 is formed and corresponding to it also in its sense as there explained. *Those trusting in* (relying on) *possessions*, the word used in the preceding verse and there explained. This second exclamation, which has been preserved by Mark alone, was evidently given to explain and qualify the one before it, by informing them that not the mere possession of the good things of this life, but overweening confidence in them, as sources or securities of happiness, would hinder men's salvation ; yet implying that as this false reliance is almost inseparable from the possession, the latter, although not necessarily, is almost invariably attended by the greatest moral and spiritual danger.

25. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

That the qualifying comment in v. 24 was not intended to retract or cancel the original assertion in v. 23, but merely to explain it, or to state the principle which it involves, is now shown by its repetition in a still more emphatic and it might appear exaggerated form, if it were not so clearly a proverbial one. *It is easier*, more practicable, less laborious, the idea suggested by the derivation of the Greek word being that of *good* (or *easy*) *labour*. *Eye*, literally hole, puncture, perforation. The supposed extravagance of this comparison led to the early substitution of a Greek word differing from *camel* only in a single letter, and supposed to mean a rope or cable, or to the explanation of *camel* itself in this unusual sense. For the latter no authority whatever is adduced, and for the former only that of a Greek lexicographer and scholiast, who appears to have invented it for the express purpose of relieving an imaginary difficulty in the case before us. The device, however, does not answer the intended purpose, as a cable can no more pass through a needle's eye than a camel. As to the congruity of the comparison, that is a question of taste and usage, and we find in the Talmud the same similitude in the still stronger form of an elephant, the largest of known quadrupeds. Our Saviour also has the camel elsewhere, as a proverbial similitude for something great. (See Matt. 23, 34.) To the more plausible objection that it represents the salvation of the rich as not merely difficult but impossible, the answer is that Christ intended so to represent it in the sense explained below (in v. 27.)

26. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved ?

This emphatic repetition of the startling proposition, in what seemed to be an exaggerated form, only served to increase the amazement of our Lord's disciples. *And (or but) they were excessively astonished*, not the verb so rendered in v. 24, but that employed in 1, 22. 6, 2. 7, 37, and originally meaning *struck* or driven from their usual or nor-

mal state of mind by great surprise or wonder. This they expressed by saying to themselves, or with themselves, i. e. to one another, *who then* (literally, and who, which in Greek is an equivalent expression) *can* (is able to) *be saved*, i. e. attain to everlasting blessedness (see above, on v. 17. 24. 25.) This does not mean merely *what rich man*, which would be an unmeaning echo of our Lord's own words, but *what man*, who of any class? The logical connection has been variously understood, but seems to be most naturally this, that if the rich, or the more highly favoured class, are thus impeded and endangered by the very advantages which they enjoy, how can others be expected to attain salvation? Some of the best interpreters, however, deny any reference to the case of others as still worse than that of rich men, and understand the disciples as simply asking, who then can escape these fearful difficulties and obstructions? This implies that they looked upon the peril not as a peculiar but a common one; either because they all expected to be rich and prosperous in Messiah's kingdom; or because all except the very poorest have their worldly interests and goods, to hinder their salvation, in the same way, although not in the same measure; or because they saw the principle involved to admit of a much wider application, just as the test to which the Saviour brought the rich young ruler might be modified to suit a thousand other cases besides that of an idolatrous regard to wealth or money. According to this view of the passage, the disciples' question may be paraphrased as follows. 'If then, as we have just heard, property or wealth, with all its advantages both natural and moral, is attended by such snares as to make the salvation of its owners impossible without a miracle; and if this is only one out of many situations and conditions, each of which has its own peculiar snares and stumbling-blocks, equally adverse to men's salvation; how is this end to be attained at all in any case?'

27. And Jesus looking upon them, saith, With men (it is) impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.

*Looking upon* (or *at*) *them*, to secure attention (as in v. 23), and perhaps at the same time to express a tender and affectionate regard to them, as he did by the use of the word *children* (in v. 24.) *With men*, *with God*, i. e. on man's part and on God's respectively, or so far as the question concerns man and God. *Impossible*, not merely difficult, which would have required a very different example or similitude from that in v. 25, since the passage of a camel (or even of a cable) through the eye of a needle is not merely hard, or rather is not hard at all, the idea of difficulty being swallowed up in that of sheer impossibility. The disciples understood this more correctly than some learned critics and interpreters, who try to explain our Lord's proverbial illustration as denoting merely something very hard. The true solution is afforded, not by such extenuation of his language, but by his own restriction of its import in the words *with men*. His answer to the

question, *who then can be saved?* is, ‘No one, if salvation were dependent upon human power; neither rich nor poor would then be saved, any more than a needle can be threaded with a camel (or a cable); but of God’s power there is no such limitation, for to him even such impossibilities are possible as the salvation of the chief of sinners, or of those whose circumstances seem to shut them out forever from his kingdom.’

28. Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

*Then*, literally, *and*, according to the common text, but the latest editors have neither. *Began to say*, not merely *said*, but said at once, immediately rejoined, perhaps implying also that he did not finish, but was interrupted by our Lord’s reply. *Lo*, behold, see here, or look at this case. *We*, the disciples, and most probably the twelve, who were his constant personal attendants, here contrasted with the ruler and with others who preferred something to Christ’s special service. *Left*, let go, abandoned, given up *all (things)*, i. e. our worldly occupations and substance. This expression shows that Peter and Andrew, James and John, did not, as some think, still continue fishermen, any more than Matthew still remained a publican. Even John 21, 3, may and must be otherwise explained. *Followed thee*, not merely in a figurative spiritual sense, but in the strict one of personal attendance. This is not to be understood as a mere boastful and self-righteous claim to some reward for their meritorious self-denial and devotion to their master, although something of this spirit may have mingled with the motives of the speaker and of those in whose behalf he spoke; but, in part at least, as a solicitous inquiry whether they could stand the test applied to the young ruler, whether they had proved their readiness to give up all, be it little or much, for their master’s sake and service.

29. And Jesus answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s—

*And Jesus answering said, Verily (amen) I say to you*, a common formula of solemn affirmation, suited both to fix attention and command belief. *No man*, no one, no person, nobody, without regard to difference of age or sex. *Left*, the same verb, with the same sense, as in v. 28. What follows is an enumeration of the ties most likely to be broken, and the interests most likely to be sacrificed, by those who personally followed Christ as his attendants and disciples. The latest critics put *mother* before *father*, and omit *wife* altogether, because not found in the Vatican and Cambridge copies. As the list is not exhaustive but illustrative, and might be therefore closed with an *etcetera*, the omission or insertion of particular items can have no effect upon the meaning of the sentence. *Lands*, literally, *fields*, i. e. cultivated

grounds. *For the sake* (or *on account*) *of me* and (in the oldest copies with an emphatic repetition) *for the sake of the gospel*, i. e. not only to attend me personally while on earth, which might be thought an object of ambition, but to spread the tidings of my wisdom and salvation, even when separated from me.

30. But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions ; and in the world to come, eternal life.

*But he shall receive, or unless he receive,* an idiom of peculiar form but unambiguous meaning, namely, that it will not be found true of any one that he has thus forsaken all, without its being also true that he receives, &c. The two things will and must go together, and the one is just as certain as the other. *An hundredfold* is not an arithmetical formula, but a rhetorical and popular expression for a vast proportion (see above, on 4, 8. 20.) *In this time*, not merely in the present life, which would be otherwise expressed (as in 4, 19), but at this critical juncture, the period immediately preceding the erection of his kingdom, during which the trials of his followers were greatest, and themselves least able to endure them. *House and brethren, &c.*, i. e. full equivalents for such of these advantages as any one has sacrificed for my sake. The precise form of the compensation is not stated, because indefinitely various, approaching nearer in some cases than in others to a literal restitution on a larger scale, as Bengel beautifully hints that Paul had many mothers, for he could say of Rufus (Rom. 16, 13), "his mother and mine." Whether wife in the preceding verse be genuine or not, no ancient copy has the plural *wives* in this verse ; nor is there any reason to believe that there was ever even this poor pretext for the sneer of Julian the Apostate, that believers had the promise of a hundred wives. *With persecutions* seems so much at variance with the tone of this encouraging assurance, that some writers have explained it to mean *after persecution* ; but although the Greek preposition is so used, it is only when followed by a different case. The true solution seems to be, that this clause is not an additional specification of what Christ's followers should experience, but a reference to what had been implied or presupposed throughout the passage. The meaning then is, not that they shall have all these compensations or equivalents for what they have abandoned, and at the same time persecutions ; but that with the persecutions which they must expect at all events, they shall have these gracious compensations and equivalents. *In the world to come*, or in the *coming age* (or *dispensation*), i. e. after the erection of Christ's kingdom, but without excluding heaven or a future state of blessedness. *Life everlasting*, i. e. a holy and happy state of being, as secured in time and enjoyed to all eternity.

31. But many (that are) first shall be last, and the last first.

*But many shall be first last and last first.* a proverbial expression which our Lord probably employed on various occasions, and the sense of which is clear notwithstanding its peculiar form as exhibited above in an exact translation. The essential meaning of the phrase, whenever used and however modified, is that of alternation and vicissitude, or revolution in the relative position of those to whom it is applied. In this place it would seem to be employed as a caution against trusting to appearances or to the permanence of present circumstances and conditions. The exhilarating promise of abundant recompense to those who had forsaken all for Christ, was in danger of being misapplied to some whose self-denial and devotion were apparent only. Of such cases the familiar type to us is that of Judas, then perhaps still unsuspected by his brethren, but soon to be degraded by his own act from the first rank as not only a disciple but an apostle, charged with special functions in the apostolic body (John 12, 6, 13, 29), to the last and lowest rank as the betrayer and the murderer of his Lord and Master. But besides this unique case, there were no doubt multitudes of others, less flagitious and important, in which high profession and pretension was to be succeeded by a proportionally deep debasement, so that many who then seemed first would become last, and on the other hand, many of the most degraded and abandoned would become first, both in divine and human estimation.

32. And they were in the way, going up to Jerusalem ; and Jesus went before them, and they were amazed ; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him,

*And they were in the way* (or on the road) *ascending to Jerusalem*, i. e. they were still upon their journey when the following discourse was uttered. This is another intimation that we have before us a connected narrative (see above, on v. 17.) *And Jesus was going before them* (or *leading them forward*), which seems to imply some unusual activity or energy of movement, as if he was outstripping them, in token of his eagerness to reach the scene of suffering. This may throw some light upon the next clause, *and they were amazed*, or struck with awe, the same verb that is used above in v. 24, here denoting probably some dark foreboding of the scenes which were before them in Jerusalem, a feeling which would naturally make them slow to follow in that dangerous direction, and dispose them to wonder at his own alacrity in rushing, as it were, upon destruction (John 11, 8.) *And following they feared* (or *were alarmed*), i. e. although they followed him, it was not willingly, but with a painful apprehension of danger both to him and to themselves. There is something very striking in the picture here presented of the Saviour hastening to death, and the apostles scarcely venturing to follow him. This backwardness would not be diminished by his *taking again the twelve*, i. e.

taking them aside from the others who accompanied him on his journey (see above, on 9, 2.) *He began* (anew what he had done more than once before) *to tell them the (things) about to happen to him.* This is commonly reckoned our Lord's third prediction of his passion to the twelve apostles (see above, on 8, 31. 9, 31); but including the less formal intimation in 9, 12, it may be counted as the fourth.

33. (Saying), Behold, we go up to Jerusalem ; and the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes ; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles.

*Behold* invites attention and prepares them for something strange and surprising, as the intimation of his death still was to them, although so frequently repeated. *We are ascending to Jerusalem,* the form of expression always used in speaking of the Holy City, on account both of its physical and moral elevation. (Compare Luke 2, 42. John 2, 13. 5, 1. 7. 8. 10. 14. 11, 55. Acts 11, 2. 15, 2. 18, 22. 21, 4. 12. 15. 24, 11. 25, 1. 9. Gal. 2, 1. 2.) The prediction is the same as in the former cases, but with a more distinct intimation that he was to suffer by judicial process, or by form of law. *They* (the Sanhedrim, the national council or representatives) *shall condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles* (literally, *nations*, meaning all nations but the Jews) for the execution of the sentence, all which was literally fulfilled, as we shall see below.

34. And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him ; and the third day he shall rise again.

This verse describes the part to be taken by the Gentiles in the sufferings of Christ, every particular of which has its corresponding facts in the subsequent narrative; the mocking (see below, on 15, 16-20); the scourging (see below, on 15, 15); the spitting (see below, on 15, 19); the killing (see below, on 15, 25); and the rising (see below, on 16, 6. 9.) Here again the terms of the prediction may appear to us too plain to be mistaken; but, as we have seen already, the correct understanding does not depend upon the plainness of the language, but upon the principle of interpretation. If they attached a mystical or figurative meaning to the terms, it mattered not how plain they might be in themselves or in their literal acceptation, which they probably supposed to be precluded by the certainty that he was to reign and to possess a kingdom. (See above, on 9, 32.)

35. 36. And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And

he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you ?

How deeply rooted in the minds of the disciples was this notion of a secular and outward reign, Mark now shows by relating an extraordinary movement on the part of two of them, among the first who had been called to be disciples and apostles (see above, on 1, 19.) He omits the circumstance preserved by Matthew (20, 20), that they offered this petition through their mother, or perhaps united with her in it. They begin, as if ashamed of their request, or conscious that it might be properly refused, by desiring Christ to grant it without hearing it. *We could* (or rather *will*), i. e. we wish, desire, *that whatever we may ask thou do for us*. The same unreasonable and circuitous form of application may be seen in Bathsheba's request to Solomon for Adonijah (1 Kings 2, 20.) But instead of promising beforehand like Solomon and Herod (see above on 6, 23) to grant the request, whatever it might be, our Lord, though perfectly aware of it, requires it to be plainly stated, not for his own information, but for their conviction and reproof. (See above, on 5, 30-33.) *What would ye that I should*, or more simply and exactly, *what do ye wish* (or desire) *me to do for you* ?

37. They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

*On thy right hand, on thy left hand*, literally, *from thy rights, from thy lefts*, i. e. the parts or places on thy right and left, the Greek idiom employing *from* where we say *on* or *at*, in speaking of direction or relative position. The two places here described are those of honour everywhere, not only in the east or in ancient times, but at any public dinner no less than in royal courts. The desire to be near him was not wrong in itself, but only as involving an unwillingness that others should enjoy the same advantage. This desire may have been nurtured by the honour which he had already put upon these two with Peter, and by the place which John appears to have occupied at table next to Christ, and therefore leaning or reclining on his bosom (see above on 5, 37, 9, 2, and compare John 13, 23.) The expression of it may have been called forth at this time by the recent promise that in the regeneration or reorganization of the church, the twelve should sit upon as many thrones judging the tribes of Israel (Matt. 19, 28. Luke 22, 30.) Referring to this promise, they seem here to ask that they may fill the nearest seats to that of Christ himself. *In thy glory*, not that of his second advent or his reign in heaven, but of his regal state or manifested royalty on earth, which they no doubt believed to be immediately at hand.

38. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye

ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

*Ye know not what ye ask*, i. e. you think that you are asking only for honour and distinction, when in fact you are asking for distress and suffering, as that which must necessarily precede it, and in which those nearest to me must expect to be the largest sharers. *Can ye* (are ye able to) *drink the cup* (not *of the cup*, which weakens the expression, but the very cup or draught) *which I drink* (*of* or *from* is a partitive expression, not in the original.) This is the more important as the cup itself is a scriptural figure for one's providential portion or the lot assigned to him by God, whether this be good or evil (see below, on 14, 36, and compare Ps. 11, 6. 16, 5. Isai. 51, 17. Jer. 25, 15. Ez. 23, 31.) The same thought is then clothed in another figure, that of baptism or purifying washing (see above, on 7, 4. 8.) (Can ye, are ye able, i. e. have ye fortitude and power of endurance) *to be baptized*, i. e. bathed, but with specific reference to the ceremonial washings of the law, (with) *the baptism wherewith I am baptized*. The original derives inimitable strength and beauty from the simple collocation (*wherewith I am baptized to be baptized*), and especially from the juxtaposition of these two forms of the same verb (*βαπτίζομαι βαπτισθῆναι*.)

39. And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of, and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized.

It is certainly creditable both to the fidelity and courage of these two disciples, that they do not shrink from this demand, or seek to be exempted from participation in the sufferings of their master, though they may have had obscure and confused notions as to what those sufferings were. It is not impossible that they expected to be under the necessity of fighting for the cause which they espoused, a prospect not necessarily appalling to these Sons of Thunder, however shocking to the modern sentimental and effeminate idea of the "gentle John." *We can*, we are able, is a resolute and brave but rash self-confident assurance, showing plainly that they had no sense of their own weakness, or correct idea of the dangers which awaited them. Their Lord however takes them at their word, and promises that so far and in this sense they shall hold a high place and one near himself by sharing in his sufferings. This prediction was fulfilled in both the brothers, but in a very different manner. James was the first apostolical martyr (Acts 12, 2); John was the last survivor of the twelve, making up, as has been well said, by the variety and length of his distresses, for the absence of the bloody crown. Even admitting that the legend of the poison and the boiling oil has no historical foundation, it is still true that John, as well as James, pre-eminently shared his master's cup and baptism.

40. But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand, is not mine to give ; but (it shall be given to them) for whom it is prepared.

This verse has been the subject of dispute for ages, some employing it to disprove the divinity of Christ because irreconcilable with his omniscience. Others, granting that he here disclaims the power in question, understand it merely of his present errand or commission, into which the distribution of rewards and honours did not enter. A third very ancient and most usual interpretation takes *but* in the sense of *unless* or *except*, and understands the sentence merely as determining the objects. The construction thus assumed, though not sustained by general usage, is sufficiently sanctioned by comparing Matt. 17, 8 with Mark 9, 8. The real difficulty in the way of this interpretation is, that it assigns no reason for our Lord's denial of their prayer, which all the explanations take for granted. But what if it was not refused, but only veiled, in order to divert their attention from the honours to the hardships of his service ? What if they were indeed to be pre-eminent, not only as partakers of his sufferings, but also of his glory, yet were not to be immediately apprised of this distinction ? How could this have been more wisely represented than it is in this verse ? 'Yes, you shall be near me and like me in my sufferings, and as to what you are to be besides, leave that to me ; the whole thing is arranged and settled, and I neither will nor can disturb it. What you ask is to be given to those for whom the Father has prepared it (Matt. 20, 23), and I would not if I could bestow it upon others.'

41. And when the ten heard (it), they began to be much displeased with James and John.

*When the ten heard it* seems to mean when they afterwards heard of it; but the strict sense of the Greek words is, *the ten hearing*, i. e. at the time, being present at the whole transaction. *Began*, but did not long continue, their displeasure being soon allayed by their master's wise and gracious interference. *To be much displeased*, or grieved and indignant, the same verb that is used above in v. 14 and there explained. *With*, literally, *about*, concerning, i. e. on account of the request which they had made.

42. But Jesus called them (to him), and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, exercise lordship over them ; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

*Calling to them*, or *calling them to* (him), as they were quarrelling among themselves. (For the usage of the Greek verb, see above, on 3, 13. 23. 6, 7. 7, 14. 8, 1. 34.) *Those appearing* (or supposed by themselves and others) *to rule the nations*, literally, to take the lead or be

the first among them. (See above, on 3, 22, where the participle of the same verb means a prince or ruler, and compare Luke 18, 18, where it is applied to the rich man mentioned in vs. 17-22 of this chapter.) *Accounted to rule* is understood by some as referring to the unsubstantial nature of all human principalities and powers. But as the tyranny ascribed to them is any thing but unsubstantial, others with more probability explain the phrase as simply meaning, those who are recognized as chiefs and generally known to be so. *Lord it over them*, oppress them, a verb elsewhere rendered *overcome* (Acts 19, 16) and *being lords over* (1 Pet. 5, 3), and even in the parallel part of Matthew (20, 25) *exercise dominion*, a variation altogether arbitrary, as the meaning is identical in all these cases. *Great ones*, grandees, a synonymous expression added to complete the description by combining greatness with priority of rank and power. *Exercise authority*, a similar parallel to the verb in the first clause, both resembling one another, not in meaning only but in form, being compounded with the same preposition (*kara*) which is either an intensive significant of downward motion or oppression from above, as if he had said, exercising power down upon their subjects. The essential idea here expressed is, that in worldly governments superiority of rank can only be maintained by force and by coercing or restraining those below. *Gentiles* in this verse should be *nations*, there being no allusion to religious differences, unless he be understood as intimating that the theocracy was necessarily exclusive of all tyranny in theory if not in practice.

43. 44. But so shall it not be among you ; but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister, and whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be servant of all.

*Not so, however, shall it be* (or according to the latest critics, *is it*) *among you*, literally, *in you*, i. e. in my kingdom, of which you are to be ministers and rulers. In opposition to this secular or worldly domination, he repeats the maxim uttered on a previous occasion (see above, on 9, 35), but in a fuller and a more expanded form. *Whoever wishes* (or *desires*) *to become great* (or pre-eminent in dignity) *among you*, *shall be your servant* (or attendant), the word afterwards used in the official sense of *minister* and *deacon*. In v. 44, he uses a still stronger term for *servant*, to wit, that which strictly means a slave. For the twofold application of the words, as a promise and a threatening, see above, on 9, 35.

45. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

They had no right to regard this as a hard saying, for their master's precept was enforced by his example. *Even the Son of Man*, the Messiah in his humiliation, *came not*, did not come into the world, *to be ministered unto*, waited upon, personally served by others, *but to minister to serve or wait on others*. This was true as to the whole

course of his public life, but most emphatically true of the great sacrifice which was to end it, and of which he had as yet said little, though it was the great end of his mission and his incarnation, *to give his life*, or soul, i. e. himself, his person, *as a ransom*, that by which one is set free, and more especially, the price paid to redeem (buy back again) a slave or captive out of bondage. This was the purchase which the Son of Man had come to make by the payment of himself, his very soul or life, as a satisfaction to the divine justice. *For*, not merely for the benefit, but in the place of, as their substitute, the only meaning which the particle here used will bear in this connection. *Many*, distinguished both from one and all, and here applied to true believers, or the elect of God, for whom Christ came to suffer. This great doctrine, so abundantly taught elsewhere, is incidentally used here to show the greatness of the Saviour's condescension and self-sacrificing love as manifested to his enemies, and thus affording a constraining motive for an infinitely less degree of self-denial on the part of his followers towards one another.

46. And they came to Jericho; and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples, and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highway side begging.

*And they come to Jericho*, pursuing the same journey which has been the subject of the narrative since the beginning of this chapter. Having passed through Perea, i. e. east of Jordan, till he reached the latitude of Jerusalem, he now turned westward, crossing the river, and stopping at Jericho, the first important station on the great road to the Holy City. This ancient town, situated five miles west of Jordan and twenty east of Jerusalem, was destroyed in the conquest of Canaan under Joshua (6, 26), but afterwards rebuilt (1 Kings 16, 34), and mentioned in the history of Elijah and Elisha (2 Kings 2, 5. 15.) It was famous for its palm-trees (Deut. 34, 3) and its balsam, a most profitable article of trade. The city is described by Josephus as in his day populous and flourishing, but now exists only as a wretched hamlet still called *Riha*, a slight modification of the Hebrew name. *And he going* (setting out, journeying) *from Jericho*, either on his way to Jerusalem, or on some excursion to the neighbourhood. *And his disciples*, i. e. the apostles, perhaps with others who habitually followed him. *And a great crowd*, literally, *crowd enough*, an idiom not unlike the use of the French *assez* before adjectives denoting quantity or number. This crowd was probably composed of people going up to keep the pass-over, and had been swollen by continual accessions from the towns and neighbourhoods through which they passed. *The son of Timeus* stands first in the original though not in the translation. *Timeus* is a common name in Greek, but is usually here regarded as an Aramaic one. *Bartimeus* is the same name with the Aramaic word for *son* prefixed, a very common form in that age, as appears from the occurrence of so many instances in the New Testament (Bartholomew, Barabbas, Bar-

jonas, Barjesus, Barnabas, Barsabas, &c.) *Blind Bartimeus*, or more exactly, *Bartimeus the blind*, implying that he was a well-known character at Jericho, which may account for his being named exclusively by Mark (compare Luke 18, 35), while Matthew (20, 30) informs us that there was another (see above, on 5, 2.) *By the way*, along the road, most probably that leading to Jerusalem.

47. And when he neard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, (thou) son of David, have mercy on me.

*It was Jesus of Nazareth*, literally, *Jesus the Nazarene is* (the one passing by.) This was the familiar and indeed contemptuous appellation by which our Lord was generally known, and in the use of which Matthew (2, 23) represents the prophecies of his humiliation as fulfilled (see above, on 1, 24.) *He began*, immediately, as soon as he had heard this, and continued so to do until he gained his end. *To cry and say*, i. e. to say aloud or with a loud voice. *Son of David*, his descendant and successor on the throne of Israel, a remarkable acknowledgment of his Messiahship (see below, on 12, 35), preserved in all the three accounts, and strikingly contrasted with the other designation in the first clause. ‘You call him familiarly, if not disrespectfully, the Nazarene, but I address him as the son of David.’ *Have mercy on me*, an acknowledgment of misery, unworthiness, and helplessness, as well as of strong confidence in Christ’s ability and willingness to help him.

48. And many charged him that he should hold his peace; but he cried the more a great deal, (Thou) son of David, have mercy on me.

*Charged him*, the verb rendered *rebuked* in v. 13 and often elsewhere (1, 25. 4, 39. 8, 32. 33. 9, 25), but here (as in 3, 12. 8, 30) meaning to command in a threatening or reproofing manner. *Hold his peace*, be silent, or say nothing (see above, on 3, 4. 4, 39. 9, 34.) There is no need of supposing a malignant motive for this interference, which was evidently prompted by a natural desire to prevent disturbance, and preserve the Prophet from annoyance, even the highest private interests, in all such cases, being looked upon as unimportant. *The more a great deal*, literally, *much more*, i. e. than he did at first, thus showing both the strength of his desire for healing and of his faith in Christ’s ability to grant it.

49. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called; and they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise, he calleth thee.

*Stood still*, literally, *standing*, stopping, as he journeyed, at the sound of that importunate petition, and perhaps of the reproofs and

threats which mingled with it. *Commanded him to be called*, or, according to the latest critics, *said, Call him!* This was a virtual reproof of the reprovers, as it ordered them, instead of keeping him away, to bring him into Jesus' presence. In obedience to this command, *they call him*, i. e. no doubt the same persons who had tried to silence him, a change of tone so natural and common in such cases that it is not necessary, if it is admissible, to put these words into the mouth of other speakers. *Be of good comfort*, cheer up, or take courage, the verb used above in 6, 50, and there explained. *He calls thee*, summons thee, requires thee to approach him. This is evidently spoken of as something strange and unexpected to themselves, if not to Bartimeus.

50. And he, casting away his garment, rose and came to Jesus.

*His garment*, upper garment, cloak or mantle (see above, on 2, 21. 5, 27. 6, 56. 9, 3), thrown aside to facilitate his motions at the risk perhaps of losing it. *Rising*, standing up, from his seat at the wayside (see above on v. 46.)

51. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

*Answering*, responding to the reiterated prayer for mercy which nothing had been able to suppress, and which therefore seemed to indicate a more than usual intensity of faith as well as of desire. *What wilt thou* (dost thou wish, desire) *I shall do to thee, or for thee*, i. e. for thy benefit or service. *Lord*, in the original, *Rabboni* or *Rabbouni*, the identical Aramaic word which Bartimeus uttered, and which Mark, as in several like cases, has preserved to us, perhaps enabled so to do by Peter's vivid recollections (see above, on 5, 41. 7, 11. 34.) *That I may see again*, one of the original meanings of the Greek verb which is sometimes no less correctly rendered *look up* (see above, on 6, 41. 7, 34. 8, 24. 25.)

52. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

*Go thy way*, go away, depart, begone, implying that his prayer was already granted, and his further presence no more needed. *Thy faith hath saved thee*, both from bodily and spiritual blindness (see above, on 2, 9.) *Immediately*, without delay or preparation as occasionally practised (see above, on 1, 31. 2, 5. 3, 3. 5, 8. 7, 27. 33. 8, 23. 9, 21), *he looked up*, or saw again, received his sight. But instead of obeying the command or accepting the permission to go home or else-

where, *he followed him* (or according to the common text, *Jesus*) *in the way*, i. e. upon his journey, forming part of the great multitude which accompanied his public entrance to the Holy City as recorded in the following chapter.

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## CHAPTER XI.

HAVING finished his account of Christ's long journey to Jerusalem, Mark, passing over some particulars preserved by Luke and John, relates his joyful recognition by the multitude as the Messiah, and his public entrance as such into the Holy City (1-11.) On his private entrance the next day with his disciples, he pronounces a symbolical judgment on a barren fig-tree, as a type or representative of unbelieving Israel (12-14.) In the exercise of his official powers he expells all traders from the sacred enclosure of the temple, thereby leading to a new combination of his enemies (15-19.) Returning the next day from Bethany, where all his nights were spent at this time, they observe the fig-tree to be already blasted, which occasions a discourse upon the faith of miracles (20-26.) On his arrival at the temple he is met by a demand from the authorities to show his right to act as he was doing and the source of his alleged commission, which he answers by referring them to John the Baptist, who had foretold his appearance and vouched for his divine legation (27-33.) The new features which distinguish this part of the history, besides the change of scene from the villages of Galilee and Perea to the streets and temple of Jerusalem, are Christ's avowal of his Messianic claims, and his assertion of them by official acts, and in reply to the objections of the national authorities. The consecution or coherence of the narrative is proved not only by the mutual connection of its parts but also by the exact concurrence of one, two, or all the other gospels, both as to the substance and the order of the topics.

1. And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples.

As he draws near to Jerusalem, our Lord prepares for his public entrance there as the Messiah. *When they approach* (or *are near*) *to* (literally *into*, perhaps *up to*, as far as) Jernusalem, *to* (the same particle, *as far as*) *Bethphage and Bethany*, two villages east of Jerusalem, and probably very near together. They are here named to designate the neighbourhood. The names are supposed to mean *house* (or *place*) *of figs and dates* respectively. Bethany is elsewhere mentioned (John 11, 1) as the residence of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, from whom it

derives its present name. It was fifteen furlongs from the city. Bethphage has wholly disappeared. *At*, close to (as on 1, 33. 2, 2. 4, 1, 5, 11, 22. 6, 3. 7, 25. 9, 10), *the Mount of Olives*, the high ridge east of Jerusalem and separated from it by the valley of Kedron (John 18, 1.) The present tense throughout this passage represents the scene as actually passing. *Sendeth forth*, or *away*, i. e. away from him and from the other disciples.

2. And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you, and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat ; loose him, and bring (him.)

*Go your way*, i. e. *go away*, or simply *go*, there being but one word in the original. (See above, on 1, 44. 2, 11. 7, 29. 10, 21. 52.) *Over against*, opposite, immediately before you. This is commonly supposed to be one of the two villages just mentioned, probably the first, as we know from John (12, 1, 12) that Christ set out from Bethany on this occasion. *Immediately entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one of men has sat*, a circumstance required in certain animals employed in religious uses. (Compare Deut. 21, 3. 1 Sam. 6, 7.) *Loosing* (or untying) bring him.

3. And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this ? say ye that the Lord hath need of him ; and straightway he will send him hither.

Our Lord anticipates the question which would necessarily occur to the disciples, namely, what they were to do if, as they must expect, objection should be made to their proceedings. If any man (i. e. any person, any body, any one) should ask them what they were doing, or why they did it, they were simply to reply that the Lord had need of it (the colt), *and immediately he sends it here* (or *hither*), the present tense denoting the result, because so certain, as already taking place. *The Lord* is understood by some in its highest sense as a divine name, the New Testament equivalent to *Jehorah* (see above, on 1, 3. 5, 19); by others in its lowest sense, as simply meaning *our Lord* or *Master*, without claiming for him any higher honours. In reality, and therefore in our Lord's intention, the two meanings are coincident, though not identical ; but how the owner of the colt would understand the title is another question. If we assume that he was a mere stranger, and that his consent was secured by an immediate divine influence, it seems most probable that he would understand *the Lord* as equivalent to *God*, in whose name the demand was made. But if we suppose with some that he was an acquaintance, or still further, that a previous arrangement had been made with him, *the Lord* will rather be a personal description of our Saviour as the well-known teacher, whose disciples were the bearers of the message. Even on this latter supposition,

however, which has no foundation in the text or context, there is evidence of superhuman foresight in our Lord's exact description of the incidents as they occurred.

4. And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without, in a place where two ways met, and they loose him.

While the parallel accounts simply state that the disciples went and did (Matt. 21, 6) and found (Luke 19, 32), as he had told them, Mark describes particularly where they found the colt tied, namely, *by the door without*, i. e. just outside of the house and at the very door, no doubt that of its proprietor, who had probably just used or was about to use it. But Mark describes the spot still more precisely, as being *on the way round*, i. e. probably the road which wound around the village, though the Greek word is applied in the classics to the streets of towns, which in ancient times, and in the east especially, were seldom straight. But as this was an inconsiderable hamlet, of which no trace now remains, and which had probably but one street, it seems better to explain the term, which occurs only here in the New Testament, according to its etymology, as meaning the highway upon which the village stood, and by which it was wholly or partially surrounded. *A place where two ways met* is a paraphrase, not of the original (*ἀμφόδον*), but of the Vulgate version (*bivio*.) The very obscurity of this description serves to show that it is not a subsequent embellishment, but the vivid recollection of an eye-witness, perhaps Peter, who is thought by some to have been sent with John upon this errand, as we know (from Luke 22, 8) that he was upon another, four days later, where Mark (14, 13) as here speaks only in the general of "two disciples." *Went their way*, as usual, means nothing more nor less than *went away*. *Loose him*, or untie, unfasten it, the colt, which in Greek is masculine. The present tense is not used here precisely as it is in the preceding verse, but has the graphic force, of which we have already met with numerous examples.

5. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

*And some of those standing there*, the owners of the colt (Luke 19, 23) or members of his family. *What are you doing, or why are you doing (this)*, the first word (*τι*), although properly a neuter pronoun, being often used as an adverb of interrogation (e. g. 2, 7. 9. 24. 4, 40. 5, 35. 39. 8, 12. 17. 10, 18.) *What do ye loosing the colt?* is not an English idiom, though obviously equivalent to saying, what do you mean by thus unfastening or untying him? Necessarily implied, though not expressed, is the demand by what right or authority they did so.

6. And they said unto them even as Jesus commanded, and they let them go.

*Even as*, just as, the Greek word (*καθώς*), like these English phrases, being a strengthened or intensive compound of the common particle of comparison (*ως*), peculiar to the later Greek. *Jesus commanded*, as recorded in v. 3, of which the very words are repeated here by Luke (19, 34.) *Let them go*, or let them alone, allowed them to do what they were doing, the verb so often rendered *let* or *suffer* (as in 1, 34. 5, 19. 7, 12. 27. 10, 14), sometimes *forgive* (as in 2, 5. 9. 10. 3, 28. 4, 12, and in v. 25. 26 below), and sometimes *leare* or *forsake* (as in 1, 18. 20. 31. 8, 13. 10, 28. 29.) The verb *go* is not expressed in Greek, unless it be taken as a part of the inseparable phrase *to let go*.

7. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him, and he sat upon him.

Omitting the circumstance, which Matthew, with his usual accuracy as to numbers (see above, 5, 2. 10, 35. 46) states distinctly, to wit, that the mother of the colt went with it (Matt. 21, 7), Mark and Luke (19. 35) speak only of the colt itself, as the animal for which Jesus sent, and upon which he was to ride. *Cast their garments*, i. e. their loose outer garments, cloaks or mantles (see above, on 5, 28. 30. 6, 56. 9, 3. 10, 50) *on him* (or *it*, i. e. upon the colt), as a saddle or a cushion. If the subject of the sentence is the same as in the first clause, this must be regarded as the act of the two disciples. *He sat upon him*, i. e. on the colt or young ass. Mark and Luke omit or take for granted what is stated expressly both by John (12, 14. 15) and Matthew (21, 4. 5), that this was in fulfilment of a prophecy of Zechariah (9, 9), which describes the King of Zion as coming to her mounted on an ass and a colt the foal of an ass, two parallel descriptions of the same thing. According to the ancient oriental custom, the ass and the mule were used by persons of the highest rank for ordinary riding and on state occasions (see Gen. 22, 3. Num. 22, 30. Josh. 15, 18. 1 Sam. 25, 23. 2 Sam. 13, 29. 18, 9. 1 Kings 1, 33. 38. 44), while the horse mentioned in the scriptures is invariably the war-horse (see Ex. 15, 21. Judg. 5, 22. Ps. 33, 17. 76, 6. 147, 10. Prov. 21, 31. Jer. 8, 6. Zech. 10, 3.) By describing the Messiah therefore as thus mounted, Zechariah represents him as a peaceful king; and by actually thus appearing, Christ appropriates the passage to himself and claims to be the peaceful sovereign there described. This obvious reference to a well-known prophecy, which any Jew would instantly detect and understand, removes a portion of those ludicrous associations, which are commonly connected with the animal here mentioned, an effect which is completed by the well-known fact, suggested by the royal usage just referred to, that the oriental ass is a less ignoble beast than the one which bears the same name elsewhere.

8. And many spread their garments in the way; and

others cut down branches off the trees, and strewed (them) in the way.

Responding to this claim, expressed in act though not in word, the people recognize our Lord as the Messiah, spreading their (outer) garments in (or on) the road, an ancient practice at the proclamation of new sovereigns. (Compare 2 Kings 9, 13.) While some thus did him homage, others signified the same thing in a still more striking and impressive manner, by cutting thick boughs from the trees and spreading them before him, so as to form a kind of bed or carpet over which he rode. The Greek word translated *branches* is not the one commonly employed in that sense and here used by Matthew (21, 8), but according to the common text a form not used in classic Greek (*στριβαδάς*) nor found in several of the oldest manuscripts (B. D. E. G.), on whose authority the latest critics have expunged one letter, so as to produce a form (*στριβαδάς*) familiar to the best Greek writers, and denoting beds or mattresses made of rushes, leaves, or twigs. As here applied it does not mean the boughs or brauches, as such, but the kind of bed or cushion which they formed when spread upon the ground, thus answering the same purpose with the garments before mentioned. This accounts for the two acts being carefully assigned to different parties, those who could not or would not use their clothes in this way substituting branches from the trees, or according to another reading, *from the fields*, into which they are then described as going from the highway, to procure materials for this strange but interesting ceremonial.

9. And they that went before and they that followed cried, saying, Hosanna! blessed (is) he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Thus far the proclamation of the new king and his public recognition had been only by significant actions upon his part and that of his attendants. But now it was to break forth into language, in a sort of alternate or responsive chorus, uttered in succession by the crowd which went before and that which followed Jesus, the distinct mention of which, both by Mark and Matthew (21, 9), was probably intended to suggest some such antiphony, the rather as it seems to have been practised in the Jewish worship and particularly in the chanting of the Psalms from which the particular passage sung on this occasion was selected, being still found in Ps. 118, 25. 26. *Hosanna* is a Greek modification or corruption of a Hebrew phrase occurring in that passage and strictly meaning *save now* (or *we pray thee*), but here used as a joyful acclamation or acknowledgment that the salvation so long promised was now come. It is no fortuitous coincidence, that this same Hebrew verb is the etymon or root of the name *Jesus*, borne by him who came to save his people from their sins (Matt. 1, 21.) *Blessed*, i. e. praised exalted, with divine and royal honours. *The (one) coming*, or *the coming (one)*, a beautiful description of the great deliverer so long ex-

pected, and to whom this psalm is obviously applicable, either directly as its proper theme, or indirectly as the person typified and represented by the ancient temple, the restoration of which after the return from Babylon this psalm, according to some eminent interpreters, was originally meant to celebrate. According to the present Jewish practice and tradition, it also formed part of the series of psalms sung at the passover, which makes it still more seasonable here, as the multitude who sang it were composed, at least in part, of strangers who had come up to observe that festival (see above, on 10, 1. 46.)

10. Blessed (be) the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

To this ancient and inspired theme the people add a variation of their own, or possibly one furnished by the liturgical forms which had been gradually coming into use for ages, and though no more authoritative than the other traditions of the elders, often, as in this case, perfectly accordant with the form and spirit of the divine patterns upon which they had been modelled. The latest critics omit the repetition of the words, *in the name of the Lord*, reading, *blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David*, who is so named as the founder of the theocratic monarchy, and the most conspicuous representative of the Messiah's royalty. *Hosanna in the highest* has been variously understood as meaning in the highest strains, or in the highest places, i. e. heaven, which again may either be a call upon the heavenly host to join in these exulting acclamations, or a direct ascription of the saving influences rejoiced in to the highest source, i. e. to God himself.

11. And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple; and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the even-tide was come, he went out unto Bethany, with the twelve.

Omitting some particulars of this triumphal entrance, which have been preserved by Luke (19, 39-44) and John (12, 16-19) but did not fall within the scope of his own narrative, Mark hastens to record his arrival at the city and the temple, here denoted by a Greek word meaning *sacred*, and applied to the whole enclosure with its courts and buildings, as distinguished from the sacred edifice or temple, properly so called, and designated by a different word (the one employed below in 14, 58. 15, 29. 38.) *And having looked around*, surveyed the temple, not from idle curiosity, nor as a means of gaining information, but as a tacit assertion of his own authority, an act by which he took possession, as it were, of his Father's house and claimed dominion over it, an attitude maintained by him throughout this final visit to the Holy City. *Eventide* (an old English word for *evening-time*) *already being the hour*, i. e. the time of day being late or far advanced towards eve-

ning. This may seem to designate the time of his arrival; but the usage of the Greek word for *already* rather connects it with the time of his departure, as expressed correctly although not precisely in the common version. *He went out* (from the city and the temple) *to* (or *into*) *Bethany*, the village mentioned in the first verse of this chapter, where he lodged or spent the nights of this last visit, no doubt at the house of Lazarus or that of Simon (see below, on v. 19, and compare Luke 21, 37. 38.) *With the twelve*, now in constant attendance on him, until the desertion of Judas (see below, on 14, 10) and the subsequent dispersion of the rest (see below, on 14, 50.)

12. And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry.

Mark appears to have recorded the occurrences of this week with remarkable precision, while Matthew, as in many other cases, sometimes puts together things which are akin, with less regard to chronological order than to mutual affinity (see below, on v. 14.) *On the morrow* (or the next day, i. e. after his triumphal entrance) *they coming out from Bethany* (or having set out from that village to Jerusalem) *he hungered* (or *was hungry*), having probably partaken of no food that morning, either because they set out very early, or because the hunger was to bear a part in the following symbolical instruction. That this was a simulated hunger, is not only an unworthy and irreverent but a perfectly gratuitous assumption, as our Lord, by his incarnation, shared in all the innocent infirmities of human nature. It should also be observed, that though the hunger of our Lord alone is mentioned, it necessarily implies that of his followers, who would thereby be prepared to feel their disappointment the more sensibly, and better to appreciate the great truth symbolized by these familiar incidents, to wit, the failure of the chosen race to answer the great end for which they had been set apart, and as it were to meet the divine expectations (compare Isai. 5, 1-4.)

13. And seeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon; and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for the time of figs was not (yet).

*Afar off*, or rather *from afar*, the expression having reference not so much to the position of the tree as to the point of observation. *Having leaves*, which in the fig-tree are said to be developed later than the fruit, and therefore presuppose it. *Came if*, an elliptical but perfectly intelligible phrase, meaning, came to see or to determine, not for his own information but for that of his disciples. *Haply*, perhaps, in Greek a particle denoting mere contingency or doubt as to the issue not in his mind, but to the view of others. *And coming to it*, literally, *upon it*, that is, up to it, reaching it after having seen it so long at a

distance. *For it was not the time (or season) of figs*, and therefore the developement of leaves was premature and unnatural, affording promise of what was not to be realized. This simple explanation, given by Mark himself, does away with the necessity of all discussion, as to the different periods at which figs ripen, or the possibility of some remaining on the tree all winter. The fact, as Mark records it more distinctly, but in perfect consistency with Matthew (21, 19), is that a solitary fig-tree by the wayside had out of season put forth leaves without fruit, and our Lord selects this premature and barren germination as a type or emblem of the chosen people, with their high professions and their ritual formality, but destitute of those fruits of righteousness, without which these external forms were worse than useless. This idea had already been embodied by our Saviour in a parable (Luke 13, 6-9), and thereby made familiar to the minds of his disciples, who would at once understand his coming hungry to the tree as a significant act, answering to that of the owner of the vineyard, who came three years seeking fruit and finding none (Luke 13, 7), especially if (as some suppose) the parable was uttered at the same time, although placed by many harmonists much further back.

14. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard (it).

*And answering*, orally responding to the tacit and unconscious refusal of the tree to keep the promise of its foliage. *No longer*, implying that it had once borne fruit, or, as the Greek particle may be explained consistently with usage, *not hereafter*, never. *Of (or from) thee let any one* (literally, *no one*, the idiomatic double negative, enhancing the negation) *eat fruit*. This is a simple calm command, the idea of a passionate vindictive imprecation being founded wholly on the word *curse* used by the disciples (see below, on v. 21), and eagerly caught up by the infidel interpreter, either as a pretext for accusing Christ of selfish anger at his disappointment in not finding figs, or of irrational displeasure at an inanimate and senseless object. This very circumstance ought to have sufficed to show that the whole transaction was judicial and symbolical, and no more chargeable with spite or passion than the similar command which goes forth against every tree or even weed that withers. *And his disciples heard*, or rather, *they were hearing*, listening, when he thus addressed the fig-tree, an expression which connects the narrative before us with its sequel, afterwards recorded in its proper chronological connection (see below, on vs. 20, 21), although added here immediately by Matthew (21, 20), so as to complete the narrative at once, a striking instance of the difference already hinted at between the two evangelists, especially in this part of the history (see above, on v. 12.)

15. And they come to Jerusalem, and Jesus went

into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves.

On his second visit to the temple after this arrival at Jerusalem, he performs a more decisive act of Messianic power, involving a direct claim, although not expressed in words, to that high character or office. This was the purgation of the temple, by breaking up the market held there, driving out the traders, and prohibiting all traffic, and all other profanation of the consecrated area to worldly uses. A similar proceeding is described by John (2, 14-16), as having taken place at the first passover after the commencement of his public ministry. The attempt to identify these two purgations as the same transaction, but referred by tradition to two different dates, has no foundation but the alleged improbability that such an act would be repeated, or that if repeated, no one of the gospels should record both, as in the case of the miraculous feeding, first of five and afterwards of four thousand (see above, on 8, 1-9.) Both these objections, however, admit of a prompt and satisfactory solution. The purgation of the temple being intended, not to produce any permanent effect, but simply to assert our Lord's authority, was perfectly appropriate both at the commencement and the close of his official life. But the first took place before the opening of his Galilean ministry, which forms the subject of the first three gospels. This accounts for their recording only the second, whereas John records the first for a twofold reason; first, because he wrote to supplement the others; secondly, because he pays particular attention to the first stage or period of Christ's work in Judea, before the imprisonment of John had led him to withdraw to Galilee (see above, on 1, 14.) The abuse or nuisance thus reformed had gradually grown up on the pretext of providing for the wants of worshippers, especially of strangers, by supplying them with victims for the altar (oxen, sheep, and doves or pigeons), and with Jewish coin to pay their tribute to the temple-treasury, which was given in exchange for Greek and Roman money. Thus the outer court (often called the court of the Gentiles) had been partially transformed into a cattle-market, and partially occupied by brokers or exchangers with their banks or money-tables. These he now *casts out*, or drives out with authority, perhaps by force, as in the former instance (John 2, 15.) The submission of the people to this discipline requires no explanation, as its purpose was symbolical not practical, and nothing more was needed than a momentary exercise of power, even though succeeded by an immediate repetition of the offence. Still more unnecessary is it to assume that during the whole interval between the two purgations the temple had been free from this profane intrusion, which was now renewed, perhaps with the connivance of the priests themselves, in opposition to the claims of him who had abated it. The probability rather is, that the inveterate custom had been interrupted only for a few days or hours, and had then been restored and continued, till it was again interrupted in the case before us.

16. And would not suffer that any man should carry (any) vessel through the temple.

*Would not suffer*, literally *did not suffer*, or permit (the same verb that occurs above in v. 6), *that any one* (not *man*) *should carry a* (not *any*) *vessel* (implement or utensil), a word of wider import than the English one, and nearly corresponding to the modern use of *article*. *Through the temple*, i. e. through the sacred enclosure, which had probably become a thoroughfare or passage from one part of the city to another. The coexistence of such profanation, not expressly forbidden by the law, but in flagrant opposition to its spirit, with punctilious attention both to commanded and traditional observances, illustrates very clearly the hollowness and emptiness of pharisaical religion. That our Lord did not suffer or permit the practice here referred to, may be either understood to mean that he forbade it and denounced it, or more strictly that he actually put an end to it, for the time being, by the powerful authority and influence arising from his teaching and his miracles.

17. And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

*And he taught*, i. e. declared in words what he had thus affirmed in act, and added force to his doctrine by clothing it in familiar words of prophecy. *Has it not been written*, has it not been long on record, an expressive application of the perfect passive, which we have already met with more than once in this book. (See above, on 1, 2, 7, 6, 9, 12, 13.) The reference is to two distinct prophetic utterances, one of Isaiah (56, 7), and one of Jeremiah (7, 11), here combined as relating to the same thing or admitting of the same application. The passage in Isaiah is a clear prediction of the future enlargement of the Church, when all distinctions, national and personal, should cease, and the Gentiles be admitted to equality of privileges with the Jews. *My house*, the temple at Jerusalem, considered as the earthly residence of God and the asylum of his people. *Shall be called*, i. e. truly called, a common Hebrew idiom equivalent to saying, *it shall be*. The main idea in the original connection is, that it should be a house of prayer hereafter not for one but for all nations. That our Lord had reference chiefly to the fact, presupposed or incidentally stated, of its being called a house of prayer, and not to its ultimate extension to all nations, may be gathered from the circumstance that the latter clause is left out both by Luke (19, 46) and Matthew (21, 13), although Mark inserts it to complete the sentence. The whole prediction could be verified only after the destruction of the temple, when the house of God, even upon earth, ceased to be a limited locality, and became coextensive with the church in its enlargement and diffusion. But the part of the sentence which our Saviour quoted was appropriate, even to the ancient temple, while the words from Jeremiah related originally to it, as profaned by

wicked Jews in ancient times. *A den*, cave, cavern, often the resort of thieves, or rather robbers, as it is expressed in the version of Jer. 7, 11. He is not to be understood as saying that this outward desecration of the temple was the worst abuse existing, or the only one intended in the prophecy, but merely that it served as a type or symbol of still worse corruptions, just as his expulsion of the traders represented a more general and sweeping reformation of abuses.

18. And the scribes and chief priests heard (it), and sought how they might destroy him ; for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.

These new and startling acts of authority were rightly understood by the chiefs of the theocracy, not as the wild deeds of a zealot imitating Phineas in his lawless yet heroic zeal for God, of which fanaticism there were many instances in that day (see above, on 3, 18), but as unambiguous assertions of a higher and more permanent power, to wit, that of the Messiah as the great reformer, so described by Isaiah (4, 4) and by Malachi (3, 3. 4, 1), and as such to be preceded by the great reforming prophet of the old economy (see above, on 1, 2. 9, 4. 11.) Aware that the establishment of these pretensions would be fatal to their own official influence, the scribes and chief priests, as the leading members of the Sanhedrim or national council, no longer doubted whether he must be destroyed, but how, by what means, it could be effected. *For they feared him*, not with a mere personal alarm, but as the representatives of Israel, on account of the popular influence already possessed by him, because *the crowd*, the multitude, perhaps used contemptuously in the sense of rabble, *was astonished*, struck with admiration and surprise, *at his doctrine*, i. e. at his mode of teaching or of setting forth his claims as a teacher come from God, to wit, by miracles as well as wisdom. (See above, on 1, 22. 27. 4, 2.)

19. And when even was come, he went out of the city.

This verse distinctly marks the close of a second day, exactly corresponding to the one in v. 11, and implying what is formally affirmed by Luke (21, 37), that during this last week his days were spent in teaching in the temple, and his nights upon the mount of Olives, i. e. at Bethany, which was on its eastern slope ; unless the terms employed by Luke be intended to suggest the idea, that at least a part of these nights was employed in prayer amidst the solitudes of Olivet, an explanation perfectly in keeping with the fact that to this evangelist we are especially indebted for the scanty knowledge we possess of the Saviour's habits of devotion.

20. And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots.

Another interesting circumstance, preserved by Luke (21, 38), and happily illustrative of what Mark here records, is the thronging of the people to the temple early in the morning for the purpose of hearing him. To gratify this salutary craving for instruction, we find him upon both these days (compare Matt. 21, 18) returning early to the city. *Passing along*, or by the same road as on the day before, they now behold the fig-tree, then conspicuous afar by its luxuriant foliage, completely blasted, withered, dried up, from its very roots. It is not said that the change took place at this time, but that they now observed it, having had no other opportunity of doing so, as their intermediate return to Bethany took place at night (v. 19.) There is nothing in Mark's language to forbid the supposition that the withering took place as soon as they had turned their backs, and therefore nothing inconsistent with the words of Matthew (21, 19), that the fig-tree was dried up or withered *presently*, i. e. in modern English, instantaneously, upon the spot. The attempt to treat this as a contradiction, although made by German writers of great eminence, would be regarded as absurd in any Anglo-saxon jury-room or court of justice.

21. And Peter, calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

*And Peter* (from whom Mark may have derived this incident), *calling to remembrance*, or, without departing from the passive form of the original, *being reminded*, put in mind, by what he saw, of what he heard the day before, *says to him, Rabbi*, the identical expression here preserved by Mark (as in 10, 51), but not perceptible in the translation either here or in 9, 45 above and 14, 45 below, though it is not easy to imagine why it was not left unaltered in these places, as so many other Aramaic words are elsewhere, and as this very title is repeatedly in John (1, 38. 39. 3, 2. 26. 6, 25) and Matthew (23, 7. 8.) This want of uniformity in rendering the same word, even where the sense and the connection are identical, although probably occasioned by the diversity of hands employed upon the version, is to be regretted, not as a violation or concealment of the truth, but as depriving the unlearned reader of enjoyments and advantages, however slight, possessed by students of the Greek text. The remedy for this and other errors of the same kind should be sought, not in endless emendation of the printed text, which would do incomparably greater harm than good, but by the faithful exposition of the words of inspiration, as a necessary part of ministerial duty. *Behold, lo, see,* a word expressive of his own surprise, and at the same time calling the attention of his master to the object which occasioned it, as in our familiar phrases, *see here, look here!* It is nearly equivalent to saying, what is this? or what does this mean? and implies what is expressed by Matthew (21, 20), an inquiry how it could have happened, i. e. how the blasting could have taken place so soon. *Which thou didst curse*, the only

place in either gospel where this miracle is so described, but from which it has come to be its standing designation among preachers and interpreters. It might perhaps be treated as a hasty word of Peter, no more infallible than several others left on record (for example, those in 8, 32, 9, 5), and uttered when he knew not what to say nor even what he said (9, 6.) But there is a sense in which the word is perfectly appropriate, to wit, that of a judicial sentence, by which evil is denounced on a deserving object and by competent authority, the only sense in which God can be said to curse his creatures, and in which too every human judge may no less truly be described as cursing those whom he condemns to death or any other punishment. Cursing is sinful when it is not judicial or not just, but merely passionate or wanton. It is asked, however, how a curse could have either of the qualities just mentioned, when pronounced upon a senseless and inanimate object. This has been made the ground of much sentimental lamentation, chiefly on the part of those who love to pick flaws in the conduct of the blessed Saviour. The reply to such objections is the plain one, that the action was symbolical, the fig-tree representing the unfaithful and unfruitful Israel, whose leaves were put forth in advance of other nations, but without the fruit which ought to have attended or preceded them, and in default of which perpetual barrenness was to be the condign punishment of barrenness itself. To the still more trivial objection, founded on the loss incurred by the proprietor, some reply that its unfruitfulness already showed it to be worthless; others that the right here exercised was just the same with that by which not only single trees but whole plantations and whole harvests are continually blasted. The difficulty can be felt by none but those who question the divinity of Him who in this case, as in that of the swine destroyed near Gadara (see above, on 5, 20), only did visibly and audibly what God does silently in every providential stroke and judgment upon man or beast, upon the animal or vegetable kingdom. It is strange that the morality or justice of an action should depend upon the visible and personal presence of the actor, or his absence and concealment from the sight of men. The true question, as to all such cases, is between the believer and the unbeliever in our Lord's divine right to control his creatures and the subjects of his providential government. Where this great doctrine is admitted, all such objections of detail will be contemptuously set aside as frivolous.

22. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

If the surprise of the disciples had related not to the sign but the thing signified, our Lord would no doubt have expounded to them the symbolical design of this judicial miracle. But as they seem to have correctly understood its meaning, perhaps aided by the parable already mentioned (see above, on v. 13), they were chiefly interested in the miracle itself, the promptness and completeness of the change effected by a word from Jesus. This astonishment implied a very different

experience on their own part, perhaps frequent failures like the one of which we have already had an account (in 9, 18. 28. 29.) For such disappointments he assigns the same cause as on that occasion, namely, a deficiency of faith, i. e. of confidence in the divine power to effect such changes, or at least in the divine grant to themselves of a derivative authority to do the same. *Hare* (more emphatic than in English, and denoting rather to retain or hold fast) *faith in God*, literally, *of God*, a Greek idiom, in which the genitive denotes the object, and which has sometimes been retained in the translation (e. g. Rom. 3, 22. Gal. 2, 16. 20. 3, 22. Phil. 3, 9. Col. 2, 12. Jas. 2, 1. Rev. 14, 12), as it is here in the margin of the English Bible.

23. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea ; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass ; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

If this indispensable condition were complied with, they could perform with equal ease the greatest and the smallest miracles, i. e. measured by the scale of their external physical effects. They could not only blast a fig-tree, but remove a mountain from the land into the sea. *This mountain*, probably the mount of Olives, over which their path lay from Bethany to Jerusalem. *The sea*, a more indefinite expression, because not referring to so near an object ; there is no need therefore of explaining it specifically of the Dead Sea, or the Mediterranean, or the Sea of Galilee. *Whosoever* (or *whoever*) in the first clause means, of course, whoever has received from me the gift or power of working miracles, to whom alone this promise was intended to apply. The mad attempts in later times to do the same by merely praying and believing, are not only fanatical but silly, as they exercise faith without an object, trying to believe what is not true, to wit, that they have previously been commissioned to perform such wonders. (See above, on 9, 29.) The verb translated *doubt* means originally to divide ; then to distinguish or discriminate ; and then, in classical usage, to determine or decide ; while in Hellenistic Greek it has the opposite meaning, to hesitate or doubt. This may be deduced either from the more elementary idea of differing, disputing, with another or one's self ; or from that of undue discrimination, as for instance, between great and lesser miracles, which last sense is peculiarly appropriate in the case before us. *Whoever does not make a difference* of this kind, or hesitate because he thinks the miracle too great, but really believes that God can do it, and has commissioned him to do it, shall undoubtedly succeed. *He shall have* (literally, *it shall be to him*) *whatever he may say*, i. e. command or predict in God's name and by his authority. Thus understood, the terms used in the first clause are not hyperbolical but literal, and mean precisely what they say, that if the apostles really believed their own commission to work

miracles and faithfully performed it, it would be as easy to remove a mountain as to blast a fig-tree. *Be thou removed*, literally lifted, taken up, but with a view to its removal, thus including the import of two English verbs, to *take up* and *take away*. *Shall come to pass*, literally *comes to pass* or *happens*, the present tense denoting the infallible certainty of the event by representing it as actually taking place. (See above, on v. 3.)

24. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive (them), and ye shall have (them.)

*For this* (cause or reason), i. e. because faith is thus essential to success in every thing dependent on a divine power, *I say unto you*, a formula preparing them for something solemn and important (see above, on 3, 28. 6, 11. 8, 12. 9, 1, 13. 41. 10, 15. 29), namely, the assurance that whatever they believed they should receive they would receive. This may be either a specific promise to those clothed with the power of working miracles, or a generic promise to believers. Taking the verse by itself, the latter would seem to be the natural construction; but the intimate connection with what goes before seems to favour if not to require the other, as no good reason can be given for so sudden a transition from a subject which concerned only the apostles, to one of general and even universal interest. How could he say *therefore*, i. e. because the faith of miracles was indispensable to their performance, whoever asked any thing believing should receive it?

25, 26. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

The same question here presents itself, as to the generic or specific application of this precept, but attended with less difficulty, as there can be no doubt that the condition here prescribed is one of universal application, and the question whether it was addressed to the apostles as such, or intended for believers generally, is of little exegetical or practical importance. It seems more natural however to suppose that our Lord has reference to the twelve apostles still, and after stating the necessity of faith and the efficacy of believing prayer, in working miracles, reminds them that the same moral dispositions were required in this as in all other prayer, particularly specifying that forgiving temper which he may have seen to be especially deficient, at least in some of them. That he had reference, moreover, to the angry or vindictive feelings of his followers towards the unbelieving Jews, whose destiny had just been foretold, is a possible but not a very obvious conjecture. *When ye stand praying*, often referred to as a common

posture, and as perfectly consistent with the most profound humiliation (Luke 18, 13), that of kneeling being rather mentioned on unusual occasions (Luke 22, 41. Acts 7, 60. 9, 40. 20, 36. 21, 51), but without forbidding or requiring either. *If ye have aught*, i. e. any thing, any ill-will, or even any just ground of quarrel or complaint. *Against any (one) or any (person)*, the Greek word being in the singular number. *That*, so that, in order that, not as a meritorious ground or a procuring cause, but simply as a *sine qua non*, or indispensable condition, which is then repeated more distinctly in the next verse.

27. And they come again to Jerusalem; and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders.

On arriving the same morning at Jernusalem our Lord begins to *walk about* the courts or area of the temple, as if at home or in his Father's house (see above, on v. 11, and compare Luke 2, 49), an action unimportant in itself, but taken in connection with his previous proceedings, tacitly expressive of the same claim which he had already more emphatically put forth by his peremptory cleansing of the temple. It is not impossible, indeed, that the walking about here mentioned was intended to observe how far that measure had accomplished its external purpose of arresting the inveterate profanation of that sacred place. While thus engaged he is accosted by the chief priests, scribes, and elders. Now as these are the three classes who composed the Sanhedrim or national council (see above, on 1, 22. 8, 31), and as every thing here indicates that Christ's proceedings had attracted the attention of that body, it is altogether probable that this was an official deputation from it, similar to that which had been sent to John the Baptist on his first appearance (John 1, 19-28.)

28. And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?

This may be regarded as the first direct conflict between Christ and the authorities of Israel, all previous collisions having been with individuals or private combinations of unfriendly parties, whereas this, as we have seen, was probably an onset by the Sanhedrim itself. The demand here made is not to be regarded as merely officious and malignant; for whatever may have been the personal or party motives of the individuals concerned, they were authorized and even bound, as guardians of the temple and the law, to ascertain on what grounds any one claimed to be a prophet, much more the prophet, i. e. the Messiah (see above, on 6, 15. 8, 28, and compare John 1, 21. 25). But although they had this legal colour for the course which they pursued, it was in fact a mere pretence and solemn mockery to ask, at this late hour, for the evidence of that which had already been so clearly proved, that

they appear to have avoided making the demand, until it was extorted from them by the Saviour's unexpected recognition by the people and assumption of the Messianic office. Being thus put as it were in a defensive position, they were rather forced against their will than eagerly disposed to put the questions here recorded. *By* (or more exactly, *in*, i. e. in the exercise of) *what authority* (or delegated power) *doest thou these things*, referring to his whole deportment since his last arrival, but particularly, no doubt, to those acts by which he seemed to claim a Messianic or Prophetic power. *What* expresses more in Greek than English, meaning strictly, of what sort or kind? The question then is, not simply whence or from what source the power which he exercised was derived, but what was the nature of the power itself, divine or human, Messianic or Prophetic. The second question is by some regarded as a more distinct enunciation of the first; but with greater probability by others, as a separate inquiry, consequent upon the other and pushing the inquisition further still. What is the nature of the office or commission which you claim to hold? And from whom do you claim to have received it?

29. And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

Instead of answering their questions, he proposes one himself which they must answer before he will answer theirs. This has often been mistaken by believing readers, and misrepresented by unfriendly critics, as a mere evasion, though a wise one, of the captious question which had been proposed to him. But why should an evasion be more wise than silence or a positive refusal to reply to all? And how could either of these causes be consistent with the Saviour's dignity, at this eventful crisis, when the time had come for the assumption of his Messianic honours? The only way in which this difficulty can be shunned is by maintaining, that the question which our Lord proposed was not intended merely to stop the mouths of his opponents, but to answer their demands for his credentials, by referring them to testimony which had been presented long before, and was really decisive of the question. The meaning then of this verse is, not merely that his question must be answered first, but that it involved the answer to their own.

30. The baptism of John, was (it) from heaven, or of men? answer me.

*The baptism of John* is here put for his ministry or mission, as it is in several other places (Acts 1, 22. 10, 37. 13, 25), and as the *cross* is often put for the gospel or for the method of salvation which it teaches (1 Cor. 1, 17. 18. Gal. 5, 11. 6, 12. 14. Phil. 3, 18.) *From heaven*, not merely of celestial origin, but also of divine authority. *Of men*, a variation only found in the translation, as the Greek preposi-

tion is the same in either case, *from men*, i. e. of earthly origin and human authority. The question thus alternatively stated is the simple question whether John was a true prophet and a messenger from heaven. *Answer me*, i. e. if you can, or if you dare, the peremptory challenge so to do implying that they would not venture to reply.

31. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him?

*They reasoned*, or still more exactly, *reckoned*, calculated, the effect of their replying one way or the other, an expression which implies that they were governed more by policy than principle in making this demand. *With (or to) themselves*, not only individually (*each one to himself*), but collectively (*among themselves*), as consultation was necessary to a joint reply, which also makes it still more probable that this was not a private but an official application (see above, on v. 27.) *Why then*, i. e. if he was a prophet sent from God, *did ye not believe him*? This may seem to be a very insufficient reason for refusing to acknowledge their belief of John's divine legation; and it is so if *believe him* merely means, acknowledge his pretensions or the truth of his doctrines. Why should they care for being thus reproached, when Christ had so often uttered far more grievous charges against them or the order to which they belonged? The only satisfactory solution of this difficulty is the one afforded by attaching to *believe* its true specific sense, which is that of believing what John said of Christ, or receiving the forerunner's testimony to his principal. If they acknowledged John's divine legation, they tacitly acknowledged the Messiahship of Jesus, which he had so publicly and solemnly attested (John 1, 15. 26. 29. 32-34. 36. 3, 30. 36.) This not only explains their motive for refusing to admit the truth of John's pretensions, namely, their reluctance to assent to what would follow necessarily, to wit, that Jesus was the Christ, but also vindicates our Saviour from the charge of evading so important and legitimate a question (see above, on v. 29.)

32. But if we shall say, of men; they feared the people; for all (men) counted John that he was a prophet indeed.

The other answer to the question was no less objectionable but for a very different reason, namely, their unwillingness to brave the popular conviction and belief of John's divine legation as a prophet, which appears to have been undiminished by our Saviour's subsequent appearance, showing clearly that the two were not considered rivals, but co-workers in the same great process, though unequal in rank and original authority. There is a slight irregularity, or rather sudden change, in the construction of this sentence, but without effect upon the meaning. It consists in abruptly breaking off what these rulers said

themselves, and continuing the sentence in the words of the historian, *they feared instead of we fear*, as expressed by Matthew (21, 26) and Luke (20, 6.) *Held John* is commonly explained to mean considered or esteemed him; but it may have the same sense as in v. 22, to wit, that they adhered to him, or held him fast, as a true prophet.

33. And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

*We cannot tell*, literally, *we do not know* (compare John 16, 18), instead of which our Lord himself says simply and authoritatively, *neither do I tell you*. This, as we have seen already, is no gratuitous or puerile evasion of a lawful and to all appearance reasonable question, but a virtual though not a formal answer to it, under the disguise of a question in return. The last clause therefore of the verse before us does not mean, as some seem to imagine, and as others willingly pretend, ‘since you cannot answer my inquiry upon one point, I will not answer yours upon another, wholly different and unconnected with it.’ But it means, ‘as you refuse the testimony borne to my Messiahship by John the Baptist, whose prophetic inspiration and divine commission you dare not deny, so I refuse to give you any other satisfaction in reply to your demand for my authority.’ The principle involved is the same as in his previous refusal of a sign from heaven (see above, on 8, 12), and in Abraham’s answer to the rich man in the parable, “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead” (Luke 16, 31.) The principle itself is the obviously just one, that no man has a right to demand a superfluity of evidence on any question of belief or duty, and that as the call for such accumulated proof is a virtual rejection of that previously given, it is the law of the divine administration to refuse it even as a favour, and to deal with those who ask it as guilty of the twofold crime of *tempting God*, in the original and strict sense of that strange expression (see Ex. 17, 2. 7. Deut. 6, 16. Ps. 78, 18. 41. 56. Isai. 7, 12, and compare Jas. 1, 13), and of making him a liar, as John still more strangely phrases it, i. e. treating him as a false witness (1 John 5, 10.) With this view of the passage, while it still remains a signal instance of our Saviour’s divine wisdom in replying to objections and in silencing opponents, it does not consist, as some unworthily imagine, in evading a momentous though malignant question by propounding one still harder on another subject, but in tearing off the mask of hypocritical anxiety to know the truth and save the name of God from profanation, by requiring those who questioned him to say first whether they believed the testimony previously given, and of which his own was really a confirmation and continuation. Thus explained, his answer may be amplified and paraphrased as follows. ‘You demand by what right I perform these functions, which belong not even to an ordinary prophet, but to the Messiah only, as if this were your first acquaintance with my claims, and as if no attestation of them had as yet been given; though

you know well that my ministry was heralded by that of a forerunner, who explicitly bore witness to me as the true Messiah, and whose testimony cannot be rejected without calling in question his divine legislation, which I therefore challenge you to do, or if you dare not, to receive his attestation of my claims, instead of asking me for other and unnecessary evidence; and if you are unwilling to do either, I have still more right and reason to say, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.'

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## CHAPTER XII.

MARK here continues his account of the great conflict between Christ and the authorities of Israel, occasioned by his publicly and unexpectedly assuming that official character, which he had before only claimed obscurely, indirectly, or in private. Following up his conclusive answer to their demand for his commission or credentials, he propounds a parable, that of the wicked husbandmen or vinedressers, setting forth the conduct of the Jews, throughout their history as a church or chosen people, to the prophets, as messengers from God, and to himself, as the last and greatest of the series, with an intimation of the necessary issue to themselves, to wit, the loss of their peculiar privileges (1-9.) In order to express distinctly the important fact, that although put to death by their hands, he was himself to be their judge and their destroyer, he subjoins another parabolical prediction, drawn from the Old Testament, to that effect, and understood by those for whom it was intended, but whose hands are still tied by their dread of popular commotion (10-12.) Instead of violence they therefore still resort to cunning, by proposing a series of questions to entrap him and embroil him either with the people or their Roman masters. The first, propounded by a coalition of Herodians and Pharisees, related to the lawfulness of their subjection to the Roman domination, but was answered so as to avoid the snare and lay down an important principle, exciting at the same time the surprise and admiration of his hearers (13-17.) The next attempt was by the Sadducees, and therefore in a more frivolous and scoffing tone, intended by a fictitious or exaggerated case, to expose the doctrine of the resurrection as a gross absurdity, but made the occasion of a most important vindication of that doctrine (18-27.) The third question was proposed by a scribe or doctor of the law, with respect to the relative importance of God's precepts, and so answered as not only to present the sum and substance of the whole law, but to command the admiration and assent of the person who had put the question, and to silence all who were disposed to push the inquisition further (28-34.) Having thus disposed of their interrogations, he now asks a question in return, involving an important Messianic prophecy, the true sense of which had been corrupted or lost sight of (35-37.) This

is followed by a warning to the people against leaders so unworthy to be trusted, both on account of their false doctrine and their covetous hypocrisy (38-40.) By a slight but natural association, this important narrative is wound up with a contrast between great and small gifts to the treasury, and a statement of the rule by which their value is to be determined (41-44.)

1. And he began to speak unto them by parables. A (certain) man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about (it), and digged (a place for) the wine-fat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

*Began*, i. e. began again, resumed the series interrupted in 4, 34; or began the series afterwards continued, although not recorded in detail by Mark (compare Matt. 21, 28. 22, 1. 25, 1. 14.) The parables uttered by our Lord in this visit to Jerusalem have a peculiar character, not only of significance and solemnity, but also of appropriateness to the crisis, and to the position which he had assumed towards the rulers of the church and people. *By parables*, literally, *in them*, i. e. in the use of them, or in that particular form of instruction. The idea of this parable is found more than once in the Old Testament (Ex. 15, 17. Ps. 80, 8), but most distinctly in Isaiah 5, 1-7, which our Saviour no doubt had in view on this occasion and assumed to be familiar to his readers. *A certain man*, or more exactly, *a man*, without any qualifying epithet. *Planted a vineyard*, i. e. planted vines in an enclosure, which is regarded in the east as the most profitable kind of husbandry. The word translated *hedge* means any kind of fence or enclosure, and is applicable even to a stone wall (Eph. 2, 14), but is here commonly supposed to mean a thorn-hedge, which is regarded as the most effectual protection against man and beast. *Digged a wine-fat*, or *under-vat*, the cellar or receptacle beneath the wine-press, into which the grape-juice flowed through a wooden grate or lattice. The circumlocution in the version is superfluous, the wine-vat itself being commonly an excavation. *A tower*, not necessarily a permanent or lofty structure, but applied to any building the height of which is its principal dimension, and in this case descriptive of a shed or scaffold, still used in vine-growing countries to protect the ripening grapes from depredation. All these are mentioned (as in Isaiah 6, 2) to indicate the care bestowed upon the vineyard, not as being the only acts required for the purpose, but as examples or suggestive of the rest. *Let it out*, literally, *gave it out*, i. e. for hire, a verb employed in the same sense by Herodotus. *Husbandmen*, cultivators, tillers of the ground, here used in the specific sense of vine-dressers, keepers of a vineyard, the exact Greek term for which occurs in Luke 13, 7. Interpreters differ very much as to the meaning to be put on the particulars of this description, some assigning a specific import to the hedge, vat, tower, &c., but all agreeing that the whole description is a lively image of the relation between

God and Israel as his chosen people, carefully segregated from the Gentiles, and provided with extraordinary means of spiritual culture and protection. *Went into a far country* is perhaps too strong a version of the Greek, which simply means to leave one's people or to go abroad, without specification of the distance. The hiring out and the departure are of course not to be pressed, but understood as circumstances introduced in order to describe God as sending and the people refusing. If explained more precisely, the departure may denote, not an essential, providential, or spiritual absence, but the mere cessation of those great theophanies or visible appearances of God, which preceded and accompanied the giving of the law at Sinai, and were followed by a series of more mediate and indirect communications, both of an ordinary kind through his constituted representatives, the kings and priests of the theocracy, and also of a more extraordinary nature by the special and occasional ministry of prophets. The former class are then described, in accordance with the usage of a vineyard, as the husbandmen, to whom it was let out or hired during the absence of the owner.

2. And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

*At the season*, in the time of fruit, or of the vintage. *Of the fruit*, in the last clause, is a partitive expression, meaning some (or a portion) of the fruit, which may be understood as implying that the vineyard was let out on shares, a common practice still, both in Europe and the East, and described by travellers as usually much more advantageous to the cultivators than to the proprietors or owners of the soil. The sending of the servant for this purpose naturally represents any call or summons to account for the advantages enjoyed, or the trust committed to God's people, and especially to those who hold official stations. Most interpreters explain it here still more precisely, as denoting the extraordinary missions of the prophets under the Old Testament economy, who might, almost without a figure, be described as servants sent to demand the fruits which the people and their rulers were required to produce, i. e. obedience to God's will and devotion to his service. Even here, however, it is better to rest in the general relation thus denoted, than to urge particular resemblances which may not have been so intended. For the general principles of parabolical interpretation, as propounded and exemplified by Christ himself, see above, on 4, 14-20.

3. And they caught (him), and beat him, and sent (him) away empty.

*But they*, the husbandmen, not only failed to execute their contract by delivering at least a portion of the fruits, but treated the message with contempt, and the bearer of it with insulting violence. *Taking him they beat (him)*, a verb which strictly means to flay or skin, but

is secondarily applied to the severest kind of scourging. *Empty*, empty-handed, i. e. without that which he came for. According to the obvious design of the whole parable, this is a lively figure for the undutiful and violent reception often given to the prophets or other divine messengers, and expressly mentioned by the Saviour elsewhere. (See Matt. 23, 29-31. 34, 37. Luke 11, 47-50. 13, 33. 34, and compare 1 Th. 2, 15. Rev. 16, 6. 18, 24.)

4. And again he sent unto them another servant, and at him they cast stones, and wounded (him) in the head, and sent (him) away shamefully handled.

It is equally needless and impossible to identify these servants with particular prophets, or even with specific periods in the history of Israel, the idea meant to be conveyed being simply that of repetition and succession, of a sin not perpetrated once for all, but frequently committed through a course of ages. There is however a perceptible gradation in the conduct of the people here exhibited, the first servant having been only beaten, but the second stoned and wounded in the head. *At him they cast stones* is the true sense of the Greek verb here, although it usually means to kill by stoning (see Matt. 23, 37. Luke 13, 34. John 8, 5. Acts 7, 58. 59. Heb. 12, 20), which is here precluded by the statement in the last clause. Pelting with stones is specified not only as an easy and familiar kind of violence, but also as the usual form of capital punishment under the Mosaic law, preferred because it could be inflicted by a number, and particularly by the witnesses or prosecutors, who were thus deterred from rash and groundless accusations (Lev. 20, 2. 27. 24, 14. 16. 23.) This judicial usage gave to lapidation a peculiar character among the Jews, even when practised without formal process, as a sort of charge, against those who were thus stoned, of some crime against the theocracy. As we know that some of the prophets perished in this way (Matt. 23, 37. Luke 13, 34), there is a twofold fitness in the action here ascribed to the husbandmen, both as a natural and common form of violence, and also as historically true with respect to the thing signified. *Wounded in the head*, a Greek verb used by Thucydides in the sense of recapitulating, summing up, reducing to heads or to one head (compare the compound form in Rom. 13, 9. Eph. 1, 10), which is plainly a figurative secondary usage, while the one which here occurs, though not found in the classics, is an obvious derivative from *head* in its original or proper import, and had probably been preserved in the dialect of common life. *Shamefully handled*, literally, *dishonoured*, i. e. outraged or insulted. This is a sensible advance upon the sending away empty of the verse preceding, the counterpart of which is not to be sought in particular aggravated cases of misconduct towards the prophets, but in the general declension of the unbelieving Jews from bad to worse throughout their history.

5. And again he sent another, and him they killed; and many others, beating some, and killing some.

*Again* is here omitted by the latest critics, but with no effect upon the meaning, the progression being adequately marked without it. The climax here attains its height, so far as the maltreatment of the servants is concerned, the beating and the stoning of the first two cases being followed in the third by killing. But that this was not intended to denote any such exact progression in the history, is now made plain by the addition of the last clause, showing that the cases previously mentioned were selected as examples out of many others varying in aggravation.

6. Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.

There is something peculiar but expressive in the very collocation of the first clause, *yet therefore one son having, his beloved*, which however is contracted by the modern critics into *yet one son he had*. *Therefore*, not a logical connective meaning *for this reason*, but a continuative particle equivalent to *so*, or *so then*, in familiar narrative. The connection here suggested is, that having sent his servants all in vain, he had now none left to send except his only and his well-beloved son. This circumstance, so admirably suited to command our sympathy in and human case, becomes revolting when transferred directly to a divine subject; a sufficient proof that parables are not to be expounded by adjusting the particular analogies and then deducing general conclusions, but by matching the supposed case, as a whole, with the real case which it illustrates as a whole, and letting only such minute points correspond as naturally fit into each other without violence or artifice. This method is not only recommended by its practical necessity in order to avoid the grossest incongruities, and also by the principles of good taste and the general analogy of language and interpretation, but required by our Saviour's own example in interpreting a few of his own parables (see above, on 4, 10-20.) To this supreme authority it is vain to oppose that of Bernard or Augustin, or the dangerous position that a parable must be made to mean as much as possible. Here again the emphasis, though not the meaning, is impaired by a departure from the original arrangement, *he sent also him unto them last*. The concluding words of this verse are so plainly expressive of hope or expectation, as to show still further that it is not this one figure in the parable that corresponds to God, but the whole picture of the vineyard, with its owner and his husbandmen and son and rewards, that corresponds to the whole history of Israel's undutiful reception of God's messages and wicked violence to those who brought them.

7. But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.

*But*, while the owner of the vineyard thus relied upon their prob-

able respect for his own son, *those husbandmen*, a natural but graphic stroke, which seems to point them out as standing on the other side, in bold relief and opposition to the figure in the foreground. *Amongst* (literally, *to or with*) *themselves*, a very common idiomatic phrase, which might seem to denote mere individual reflection, but is determined to mean more, namely, mutual consultation, not only by the usage of the same terms elsewhere (see above, on 2, 8, 9, 33, 10, 26), but by the nature of the proposition made, necessarily implying a plurality of actors, and as a necessary consequence, of plotters. *The heir*, the owner of the vineyard by filial or hereditary right. *Come*, hither, the invitational adverb used in 10, 21, but with a plural termination like a verb, as in 1, 17, 6, 31. It is here, like *come* in English, not expressive of mere motion, but a proposition to perform a certain act, even though it could be done without a change of place at all. Here again it is incongruous to press the correspondence of the sign and the thing signified, although this proposition bears an evident analogy to the ambitious and absurd attempt of the Jewish rulers, in the time of Christ, to oust him from his heritage and make their own provisional authority perpetual. In every effort to continue the Mosaic institutions beyond the time prescribed for their duration, the Jews have been guilty of the usurpation here projected by the husbandmen.

8. And they took him, and killed (him), and cast (him) out of the vineyard.

*Took him*, the words translated *caught him* in v. 3, and in both cases strictly meaning *taking him*, as a preparatory act to further violence. *Killed him* and *cast him out* would seem to mean that the latter insult was offered to his dead body; but as Matthew (21, 39) and Luke (20, 15) invert the clauses, there is probably no stress to be laid upon the order, and Mark's expression, although less exact, may be considered as equivalent in meaning to the others. The act of casting out denotes the whole rejection of our Lord, but perhaps with an allusion to the literal fact of his suffering without the Holy City (see below, on 15, 20, and compare Heb. 13, 11-13), which must not however be regarded as the whole sense, any more than John the Baptist's preaching in a wilderness exhausted the prediction of Isaiah (see above, on 1, 3, 4), or the dividing of our Saviour's garments that of David (see below, on 15, 24, and compare Ps. 22, 18). As in many cases the external coincidence serves merely to identify the subject of a prophecy, the same rule may at least occasionally hold good in the exposition of a parable.

9. What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

*What shall (or will) he do*, not merely what would the owner of a vineyard do in such a case as that supposed; for this form of the

question would imply that the whole case was hypothetical ; whereas the future treats it as a real one, and still in progress, thus affording a natural and beautiful transition from the sign to the thing signified. As if he had said, by way of application, ' Well, there is such a vineyard and there are such husbandmen and they have done all this ; and now I ask you how the owner of the soil may be expected to treat such tenants ? ' The answer to this question, which Mark records as given by our Lord himself (compare Matt. 21, 41), is one of the clearest intimations of the change of dispensations, the destruction of the faithless Jewish rulers, and the transfer of their privileges to another people, neither Jews nor Gentiles as such, but a new community composed of both. The question how the vineyard, if it means the Jewish church, could be taken from the Jews themselves, is one of those arising from the practice, which has been already mentioned, of matching the detached parts of the sign and the thing signified, instead of treating them as wholes and letting the minutiae adjust themselves. The supposed violation of analogy is nothing to the one in the parable of the Sower, where the seed is first explained to mean the word, and then apparently identified with the hearers (see above, on 4, 15. 16. 18. 20), and yet no plain reader of that parable has ever been disturbed in his conceptions of it, because founded on the obvious sense and application of the whole, and not on a measurement of each supposed correspondence by itself. The solution given by some writers of this difficulty, namely, that the vineyard does not mean the Jewish church but the Kingdom of God among the Jews, is rather an evasion than an explanation, or, if not evasive, is at least superfluous, for the reasons just suggested.

10. And have ye not read this scripture : The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner—

Admirably suited as this parable was to illustrate the conduct of the Jews to the Prophets and to Christ himself, it was insufficient for his purpose, as to one point, namely, that it left the Son dead outside of the vineyard, and ascribed the work of vengeance only to the father. To intimate his own resuscitation and return as an avenger, he subjoins another parable (in the wide sense of the term) also derived from the Old Testament, but not amplified like the other or reduced to narrative form. The passage quoted is Ps. 118, 22, in the Septuagint version with but little change. The words in the original immediately precede the *Hosanna* uttered by the people in their acclamations at his public entrance (see above, on 11, 9. 10) and imply his sanction of that application. *Hast you not read*, or did you never read, a form of speech implying that the Hebrew scriptures were not merely read in public but in private. *This scripture*, in the specific sense of a text or passage (see below, on 15, 18, and compare Luke 4, 21.) *Rejected* is in Greek still more expressive, as it implies previous examination, proof, or trial (see above, on 8, 31). *The builders*, or *those building*

(the spiritual temple or the kingdom of Messiah), an appropriate description of the priests and rulers whose official work it was to carry forward that great enterprise, which might well be likened to a glorious structure, such as a palace or a temple (1 Cor. 3, 9. Eph. 2, 21). *Is become*, literally, *this is* (or *has*) *become for*, i. e. been converted into, *a head*, not the top or summit but the main or chief stone, *of a corner*, and therefore an important part of the foundation. Augustin and other Fathers make the point of the comparison to be the junction of two walls as an emblem of the Jews and Gentiles. Some later writers understand the corner-stone itself as an emblem of the Gentiles, whom the Jews rejected, but whom God was about to put into their place. But the reference to Christ is required not only by the context here, but by the repeated application of the passage to him elsewhere (compare Eph. 2, 20. 1 Pet. 2, 6).

11. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

*From the Lord was* (came to pass, proceeded) *this*, a feminine form in Greek, which most interpreters regard as a close copy of the Hebrew idiom, in which there is no neuter form, but the feminine pronoun is used to signify *this thing*. Some of the best interpreters, however, make it agree regularly with the feminine noun *head* or *corner* which removes the irregularity in Greek, but only by departing from the Hebrew construction. From Mark's brief account it might appear, that this quotation was intended merely to describe Christ as exalted to his proper place in "God's building," notwithstanding his contemptuous rejection by the Jews; but from the fuller report of Matthew (21, 43. 44) and Luke (20, 18), we learn that it was also meant to represent him as a judge and a destroyer, an idea which the foregoing parable could not convey without a violation of its plan and imagery which required the Son to be regarded simply as a victim to the cupidity and hatred of the husbandmen.

12. And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people; for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them; and they left him, and went their way.

*They*, not the people, who are distinguished from them in the next clause, but the chief priests, scribes, and elders, whose demand for his commission or authority had given occasion to this whole discourse (see above, on 11, 27.) *Sought*, not merely wished, but used means, or at least endeavoured to discover them. *But*, literally, *and*, the simple conjunctive being often used where an adversative particle is required by our idiom. *The people*, literally, the crowd, the masses, whom they despised as well as feared (John 7, 49.) *They knew* is by some referred to *crowd* or *people*, as a collective, *they* (*the people*) *knew that he spoke the parable to* (at or against) *them* (*the priests, &c.*), and the latter therefore did not dare to seize him, lest the people should

take sides with him against their rulers. But most interpreters prefer the obvious construction, which supposes *they* and *them* to have the same antecedent, and the clause to give the reason not for their fearing but for their desiring to arrest him. They desired it because they understood the parable as pointed at themselves; but because they were afraid of the people, they deferred the execution of their purpose and apparently left him to return no more. *Went their way*, as usual, means nothing more than *went away*.

13. And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in (his) words.

But although thus foiled in their direct attempt to silence him, they lose no time in aiming at the same end by a more insidious method, all the parties hostile to him coalescing for a moment in a joint and several effort to destroy his popularity and influence, by setting him at variance either with the Roman government or Jewish people. The means employed for this end was a series of entangling questions upon difficult and controverted points, both doctrinal and practical, to which it seemed impossible for him to return any answer that would not commit him in the eyes of some important party. This design is apparent from the coalition of two adverse sects or parties in the first attack, the Pharisees, or bigoted opponents of all heathenish and foreign domination, and the Herodians, or followers of Herod, who sustained him as the instrument and vassal of the Romans. This unnatural alliance between parties diametrically opposite in principle was caused by their common hostility to Christ, whose growing influence was far more dangerous to both than either could be to the other. By combining, too, they seemed to render his escape impossible, as any answer which would satisfy the one side must of course afford a ground of opposition to the other. Of this crafty and unprincipled contrivance, on the part of men whose only bond of union was their hatred of our Lord and their desire to destroy him, it might well be said that their design was *to catch him*, as a bird is caught in fowling, *by a word*, i. e. by a perplexing question, or, as some explain it, by an unguarded answer.

14. And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man; for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to give tribute to Cesar, or not?

*And they coming say to him*, their first words being not a peremptory challenge, as in the preceding case (11, 27), but a flattering address intended to allay suspicion and conceal their real purpose, so as to throw him off his guard and make it easier to entrap him. *Master*, i. e. Teacher, *we know*, not necessarily a false profession, since the character here ascribed to Christ was not only true but universally acknow-

ledged. *True*, i. e. honest, candid, truthful, one who spoke the truth without regard to consequences. *Carest for no man*, in the Greek a double negative, as usual enforcing the negation (see above, on 5, 37.) *It does not concern thee about no man*. The impersonal verb is that employed above in 4, 38, and there explained. What they here ascribe to him is not indifference or unconcern as to the welfare of others, but independence of their influence and authority, as motives for suppressing an unwelcome truth. The flattery here lies, not in the falsehood or extravagance of the description, but in the honesty with which they seem to comprehend themselves among those for whom he did not care in the sense above explained. As if they had said, we come to you not only as a wise and famous teacher, but because we know that you will tell us to our faces what you think, without considering how it will affect us. *Regardest not the person*, literally *dost not look into the face* (or at the outward appearance) *of men*, i. e. art not influenced by any difference of rank, position, wealth, or power, a regard to which in the administration of justice was forbidden in the law of Moses as *respect of persons* or judicial partiality. (See Lev. 19, 15. Deut. 1, 17. 16, 19, and compare Prov. 24, 23. 28, 21.) The same thing is here denied of Christ, not as a judge, but as a teacher. *In truth or of a truth*, i. e. truly, really, sincerely, without any such reserves or personal regards as those just mentioned. Such adulation has blinded the eyes and warped the judgment of its thousands and its tens of thousands among human sages, and especially of those who glory in their insusceptibility of flattery. It is not surprising, therefore, that these crafty casuists and politicians, who regarded Jesus as a mere man, though an eminently wise and good one, should have hoped to find him as susceptible of flattery as others. Having thus prepared the way for their ensuing question, they at length propound it, in a very categorical and simple form. *Is it lawful*, is it right, not in itself or in the abstract, but for us as members of the chosen people, subjects of a theocracy (see above, on 2, 24. 26. 3, 4. 6, 18. 10, 2), *to give tribute*, literally *census*, one of the Latin words embedded in the Greek of Mark (see above, on 6, 27), strictly meaning an enrollment of the people and assessment of their property with a view to taxation (compare Luke 2, 1-5), but also used in the secondary sense of the tax itself, here distinguished as a Roman not a Jewish impost by the Latin word applied to it and by the express mention of the taxing power. *Cesar*, a surname of the Julian family at Rome, inherited from Julius Cæsar by his grand nephew and adopted son, Octavius or Augustus, the first emperor of Rome, was afterwards transmitted through the line of his successors, not only those who were connected with his family, but those exalted by a popular or military nomination. It is here applied abstractly to the office, or rather to the actual incumbent, Tiberius, the step-son and successor of Augustus, who reigned from the 14th to the 37th year of the Christian era. It is not however in his personal capacity, but as the representative of Roman power, that he is here mentioned. *Or not?* an artful presentation of the question as requiring a direct and categorical solution, without qualifications or distinctions, but as we say in English, “*Yea or nay?*”

15. Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see (it.)

*May we gire, or may we not give?* the form of the Greek verb being not future but subjunctive and indefinite. It is therefore really another form of the preceding question, not a second one consequent upon it, as the English version seems to intimate. 1. Is it lawful? 2. Shall we do it? for a thing may be lawful and yet not expedient or binding. (Compare 1 Cor. 6, 12, 10, 23.) But in Greek no such distinction is expressed or suggested, but a simple repetition of the same inquiry in a different and more laconic form, thus rendering it still more categorical and peremptory, as admitting of no answer but a simple affirmation or negation. While the preamble to the question, therefore, was adapted to conciliate and prepossess an ordinary wise man, the question itself was so framed as almost to extort a categorical and therefore compromising answer. But he with whom they had to deal saw not only through their question but themselves, and shaped his course accordingly, so as at one stroke to solve the difficulty and defeat their malice. *Knowing* (or according to some copies, *seeing*) *their hypocrisy*, the part which they were acting (see above, on 7, 6), but here from the connection necessarily suggesting the idea of dissimulation, false pretences, which we commonly attach to the derivative in English. *Why tempt ye me?* not why entice me into sin, which is the ordinary sense of tempting (see above, on 1, 13), but why do you try me, prove me, put me to the test, which is its primary and proper import. (See above, on 8, 11, 10, 2.) Then, instead of answering *in thesi*, as they evidently wished and expected, he gives a striking popularity and vividness to what he is about to say, by addressing it not only to the ears but to the eyes of those about him. *Bring me a penny, a denarius*, another of Mark's Latin words, denoting a silver coin in common circulation since the Roman conquest, worth from fifteen to seventeen cents of our money, but here mentioned not with any reference whatever to its value, but as the *tribute money* (*coin of the census or taxation*) as it is expressed in Matthew (22, 19.) *That I may see (it)*, is almost sarcastic, for though he did desire and intend to see it, yet the words, if seriously understood, seem to imply that he had never done so, and expected to derive some information from an inspection of the coin itself. But this was no doubt understood by all about him as a sort of grave rebuking irony, intended to disclose his knowledge of their secret motives, and his scorn of their hypocrisy, in raising such an abstract question on a point decided by their every-day transactions in the way of business. As if he had said, 'What! are you required to pay taxes to the Romans? And in what coin? Let me see one'—thus attracting the attention of all present to the question, and preparing them to understand his memorable answer.

16. And they brought (it.) And he saith unto them,

Whose (is) this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cesar's.

*And they* (either those who put the question or some others present) *brought (it.)* We may now conceive of him as holding the denarius in his hand, or displaying it to those around, as if it had been something new, thus still more exciting curiosity and gradually opening the way for the solution of the difficulty which had been suggested. *Whose is this image and inscription?* referring to the well-known head and title of the emperor by which the money was authenticated as a legal tender. As if he had continued in the same tone as before, 'See, this money has a man's head and a man's name stamped upon it; what does this mean? who is this, here represented both in words and figures?' The inevitable answer, *Cesar's*, may to some have suggested, at least vaguely and obscurely, the solution just about to be expressed in words, while others, perhaps most, still continued in suspense, until the words were uttered.

17. And Jesus answering, said unto them, Render to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

The first words of this verse are not to be slurred over as mere expletives or words of course, but read with great deliberation and strong emphasis. *And Jesus* (having thus directed attention to the captious and unreasonable nature of the question, not evading it, but) *answering* (at last) *said unto them*, i. e. directly to his tempters, as a solution of their abstract question, but at the same time through them and as it were over their heads, to the surrounding masses, as a practical direction or a rule of duty. *Render* (return, pay back) *the (things) of Cesar to Cesar, and the (things) of God to God*, a collocation more emphatic (though identical in meaning) than the one in the translation, as it places last in either clause, not the thing to be paid but the person to receive it. Some attach to the Greek verb the diluted sense of simply giving out or paying, but the strong sense of paying back, restoring, correctly though not clearly enough given in our version, is not only permitted by the etymology and favoured by the usage of the word (compare Matt. 5, 26. 33. 6, 4. 18, 25. 20, 8. Luke 4, 20. 9, 42. 19, 8. Rom. 12, 17. 13, 7. 1 Th. 5, 15. 1 Pet. 3, 9), but required by the whole connection and essential to the full force of our Saviour's answer. Of the numerous specific senses put upon that answer there are probably but two exegetically possible and yet essentially unlike. The first of these supposes Christ to represent the two things as entirely distinct and independent of each other, belonging to eccentric incommensurable spheres, and therefore not to be reduced to any common principle or rule. As if he had said, Pay your taxes and perform your religious duties, but do not mix the two together or attempt to bring them either into conflict or agreement; for they really belong to different worlds or systems, and have nothing common or

alike by which they can even be compared. This paradoxical interpretation would deserve no notice had it not been gravely urged by one of the most celebrated modern German writers. The other exegetical hypothesis supposes Christ to say precisely the opposite of this, to wit, that the two duties are in perfect harmony and rest on one and the same principle. Within this general hypothesis, however, there are several gradations or distinct forms of opinion as to the principle here laid down. Without enumerating all these, it will be sufficient to state two, the lowest and the highest, which can be reduced to this class. The former understands our Lord as rather distinguishing the two obligations, but affirming their consistency and equal obligation, when they are not in collision. The latter understands him as identifying both as parts of one and the same system, as if he had said, your civil duties are but parts of your religious duties. By rendering to Cesar what is his you render unto God what is his. But the question still remains, what doctrine did he teach as to the Roman domination and the duty of the Jews while under it? The most approved and prevalent opinion is that in accordance with the maxim of Maimonides and other rabbins, he regards the circulation of the coin of any sovereign as a practical proof that his sovereignty not only exists but is submitted to. So long as the Jews submitted to the Romans and enjoyed their protection they were not only authorized but bound to pay for the advantage. Others make the prominent idea that of penal visitation, or subjection to the Romans as a punishment of sin. The other precept, render unto God, &c., is understood according to these different hypotheses as meaning either, give your souls or yourselves (which bear his image) back to him by faithful service or by true repentance, as you give back to the emperor in tribute the coin which he circulates among you. All these constructions seem to me too artificial, and the only satisfactory one that which understands our Lord as first suggesting by the very aspect of the coin that they were under obligations to the civil power, and then reminding them that till these came in conflict with religious obligations they were no less binding. As if he had said, 'Yes, if you are actually under Roman domination, yet allowed to serve God in the way of his appointment, and indeed protected in that service, you are bound to pay back what you thus receive, but no such obligations can destroy those which you owe to God himself, or suspend them when they come in competition. In a word, repay to Cesar what he gives you, and to God the infinitely greater gifts which you receive from him.'

18. Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying—

*Also come the Sadducees to him,* after the discomfiture of the Herodians and Pharisees. This does not seem to have been prompted by the same motive with the first attack, but rather by a frivolous desire to ridicule the doctrine of the resurrection, the denial of which is elsewhere mentioned as a characteristic of the party (compare Acts 23, 6.)

*Those saying (teaching or maintaining) a resurrection not to be. Asked (questioned, catechized) him, saying,* what is recorded in v. 23, the four intervening verses being a preamble or a statement of the case on which the question was founded.

19. Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave (his) wife (behind him), and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

*Master* (Teacher), the same form of address with that in v. 14, admitting his authority as a religious teacher, if not as a prophet. *Moses wrote to us* may either mean prescribed to us, enjoined upon us, or be an ellipsis or contraction of the phrase in 10, 5, *wrote us a commandment*. The law referred to is in Deut. 25, 5-10, and was a temporary regulation intended, like some other provisions of the law (e. g. Lev. 25, 13. Num. 36, 4. 7) to keep the tribes and families of Israel as far as possible *in statu quo*, during the period of national independence. After the deportation of the ten tribes and the return of Judah from captivity, the reasons for this singular provision were no longer in existence, at least in the same degree, and there is very little probability that it was still observed. This, with the extravagance of the case here stated, makes it highly probable that it is not a real but a fictitious one, invented for the purpose of casting ridicule upon the resurrection, or as some suppose a well-known argument in the dispute between the Pharisees and Sadducees.

20. 21. 22. Now there were seven brethren, and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed. And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed, and the third likewise. And the seven had her, and left no seed; last of all the woman died also.

The technical formality with which the case is stated may belong to the usage of the Jewish schools, analogous to the modern practice, when a question is submitted for professional opinion. Or the prolix repetition may have been intended to enhance the ridicule of the supposed case. *Had* in v. 22 is not the verb so rendered in the next verse, but the one which properly means *took*, and is so translated in vs. 20. 21.

23. In the resurrection, therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife.

This is the question growing out of the case previously stated. It is not like that of the Herodians and Pharisees, adapted and intended to entangle or embroil him with the government or people, but a mere

puzzle, or at most a grave scoff at the doctrine of the resurrection, as involving such absurdities of theory and inconveniences of practice.

24. And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God ?

*Therefore*, literally, *for this*, on account of this, referring to what follows. ‘Is not this the cause of your mistake, that you do not know,’ &c. *Err*, wander from the truth and from right reason. *Not knowing the scriptures*, either in the sense of not being familiar even with the letter of their teachings on this subject, or more probably in that of not correctly understanding what they did know as to its external form. The two things which he charges them with not knowing are, what God had taught, and what God could do.

25. For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels which are in heaven.

*When they rise*, not the woman and her seven husbands, as in v. 23, but men in general, the dead, as appears from the general form of the ensuing proposition. *Neither marry nor are married* (or *given in marriage*), a sort of proverbial expression expressing the same act or contract with respect to the two sexes or the two parties in each case of marriage (compare the compound form in Matt. 24, 38. Luke 17, 27. 1 Cor. 7, 38.) *As* (or like) *angels in heaven*, i. e. immortal, and therefore not dependent upon reproduction for the preservation of their species. Some construe the clause, *are in heaven like the angels*; but the words relate to their condition upon earth, not in the resurrection-state, or the period which follows that event, but at the very time of its occurrence.

26. And as touching the dead, that they rise; have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I (am) the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?

*Touching* (about, concerning) *the dead*, that they do (i. e. are to) *rise*. As to the truth or the doctrine that the dead rise, *Hare you not read*, or did you never read, as in v. 10. *The book of Moses*, i. e. the Pentateuch or Law, which is not made up of distinct compositions, but was continuously written, and is really one whole, the subdivisions being merely mechanical and for convenience, which accounts for the five books having now no titles in the Hebrew text, but being designated by initial words and phrases. *In the bush* may either designate the place where the words were originally uttered, or the portion of the Pentateuch in which they are recorded (viz. Ex. 3, 6), according to

an ancient method of citation which occurs occasionally even in the classics (e. g. Pliny says *in plumbo* when referring to his chapter upon lead), and as some think in another passage of this gospel (see above, on 2, 26.) This citation takes for granted the Mosaic origin and divine authority of the writing from which it is derived. From our Lord's selecting such a passage rather than others in the later scriptures which appear more pertinent and cogent (e. g. Isai. 26, 19. Ez. 37, 1-10) Tertullian and Jerome inferred that the Sadducees acknowledged only the five books of Moses, which was long the prevalent belief; but in our day the most competent authorities deny that there is any ground for this opinion, and allege that the Sadducees differed from the Pharisees, not as to the canon of scripture, but only as to the traditional or oral law (see above, on 7, 3.)

## 27. He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living : ye therefore do greatly err.

Two objections, not without some colour, have been made to the validity of this, considered as an argument in favour of the resurrection. The first is, that the declaration in the passage cited seems to mean no more than that he who had been the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, would still be the God of their descendants, which would be no less true if the patriarchs had ceased to exist. The other is, that even if it necessarily assumes their continued existence, it only proves the immortality of the soul, and not the resurrection of the body. Various attempts have been made to meet this difficulty, by alleging for example that as man consists of soul and body, their reunion is implied or ensured by the fact that God is still their God ; or by assuming that the declaration cited has respect to a covenant represented as still valid, and therefore implying the continued existence of the souls, and the future reunion of the souls and bodies of the human parties to that covenant. But all such explanations lay the chief stress upon something not spoken of at all, either in the original passage or in Christ's citation and interpretation of it. Perhaps the simplest and most satisfactory solution of the difficulty is, that this is not an argument at all, but an authoritative declaration of the truth. Our Lord must then be understood, not as saying that they ought to have known this doctrine to be taught in that familiar passage, but as telling them that this, though not its obvious, is its real meaning. 'Did you never read that gracious declaration of the Lord to Moses, in which he describes himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ? Well, to you that may seem to be a mere reminiscence of the past ; but I can tell you that the patriarchs are there referred to, not as persons who exist no longer, nor even as disembodied spirits, but as living men, possessed of souls and bodies, whose God Jehovah is to be forever, a relation partially suspended for the present by the separation of these parts, but hereafter to be fully reinstated by the resurrection and redemption of the body. In your interpretation of such scriptures, and in your rejection of this doctrine, *ye do therefore greatly err.*' This view of the matter, while

it does away with the necessity of all abstruse and recondite constructions, answers every necessary purpose; for the context and the circumstances of the case are as fully satisfied by an authoritative declaration as they would be by a formal demonstration, since in either case the doctrine of the resurrection is confirmed by the highest possible authority, the only difference between them being that our Lord, upon the supposition here proposed, instead of arguing the point, simply states the conclusion, thus teaching with authority and not as the scribes (see above, on 1, 22), who, as we learn from Luke (20, 39. 40), were both satisfied and silenced by this unexpected answer.

28. And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

This may at first sight seem to be an attack from a third quarter; but not only were the scribes for the most part Pharisees (see above, on 2, 16), but Matthew (22, 34. 35) says expressly that this one was *a lawyer from among them*, who acted as their spokesman, on their reassembling after the discomfiture of the Sadducees. It is therefore a renewal of the first assault (vs. 13-17), but in a less insidious form, and by a less prejudiced and hostile agency, yet still with the design of tempting i. e. trying him (Matt. 22, 35.) The way in which the two accounts complete each other as to this point, although perfectly familiar to our courts of justice, is of course regarded by some pedagogues and pedants as a glaring contradiction, which it is uncandid and unreasonable either to deny or to attempt to harmonize. This scribe had been a witness of the previous conversation, and was no doubt one of those whom Luke describes as applauding our Lord's answer to the Sadducees. While Matthew therefore represents him as a tempter in the sense before explained (see above, on 8, 11. 10, 2. 12, 15) and as the spokesman of the Pharisees, Mark, with perfect consistency, gives prominent relief to his personal respect for Christ and his real curiosity to hear his judgment on the subject here propounded. *What* (or what kind of) *commandment*, as the first word strictly means, though often used for mere numerical distinction (see above, on 11, 28.) *All*, in the oldest copies, is masculine or neuter, and cannot therefore be grammatically construed with *commandments*, but with *things* understood, forming a sort of superlative compound, *first-of-all*. *First*, i. e. in importance and binding force. This is said to be an old rabbinical dispute, still extant in the Jewish books. The trial (or temptation) here involved no risk (as in the joint demand of the Herodians and Pharisees), but only a dissent from one of the contending parties, and a loss of reputation as a wise expounder of the laws, if not a suspicion of grave error in preferring certain precepts to all others.

29. 30. 31. And Jesus answered him, The first of all the

commandments (is), Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this (is) the first commandment. And the second (is) like, (namely) this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

These snares our Lord avoids by stating in reply, not a precept of the decalogue, or any other one commandment of the law, but its comprehensive summary in Deut. 6, 4. 5 and Lev. 19, 18, the former passage summing up the first and the latter the second table. By this admirable answer, he avoids the inconveniences attending a more specific one, and at the same time turns away the thoughts of those who heard him from unprofitable subtleties to fundamental principles of the highest practical importance. Instead of singling out particular commandments as entitled to the preference, he gives the first and second place to two contained in scripture and preceptive in their form, yet comprehending all the rest, and at the same time setting forth the true principle of action, to which all obedience owes its value and its very being. The first quotation is the famous *Shema* of the Jewish worship, so called from its first word (*שָׁמָע*) meaning *hear*, and constantly repeated as a sort of creed or summary of all religion. There is no need of attempting any nice distinction between *heart* and *soul* and *mind*, the obvious design of the accumulated synomyes being to exhaust the one idea of the whole man with all his powers and affections. This likewise renders unimportant the additions made to the original, either in the Septuagint or the gospel, and the variations of existing manuscripts, since none of these diversities or changes have the least effect upon the main idea of supreme love to God and disinterested love to man. Self-love, as being an original principle of our nature, and therefore not subject to the caprices of the will, is wisely made the standard of men's love to one another, which would otherwise be ever sinking far below the level of our natural regard to our own welfare. *And (there is) a second, like (or of the same kind, namely) this. Greater than these, other precept (or commandment) there is not.* Of all our Saviour's wise and happy answers to insidious or puzzling questions, this is the most exquisitely beautiful, because so unambiguous, so simple, so exactly corresponding to the form of the question, so evasive of its trifling and unprofitable element, so exhaustive and demonstrative of what was really important in it, and therefore so unchangeably instructive and so practically useful to the end of time.

32. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth; for there is one God, and there is none other but he—

One of the finest strokes in this fine picture, which the sceptical

critics do their best to neutralize, if not efface, is the effect produced upon the scribe himself, a change of feeling altogether natural and easy in a well-disposed and highly cultivated mind, on finding unexpectedly such deep and clear views of the meaning of the law, where he had only looked for abstruse subtlety or shallow commonplace. The puerile idea, that one evangelist describes him all through as an enemy, the other as a friend, is as worthy of its authors as it is unworthy of the subject, not only on religious principles, but even on their favorite ground of esthetics and psychology. Nothing can be truer to human nature or in better taste than the very change of feeling which these writers so contemptuously set aside as a sheer harmonistical invention. Another pitiful failure of the same school is the effort to identify this conversation with another like it, but of somewhat earlier date, preserved by Luke (10, 25-28), as having given occasion to the parable of the good Samaritan. If this hypothesis, intended to discredit all the narratives, as flowing from inconsistent and confused traditions, requires any other refutation than is furnished by the palpable difference of text and context, it belongs to the exposition of that gospel. *Well* is not a mere expletive or even a connective similar to *why* or *so* at the beginning of a sentence, but an emphatic adverb (as in v. 28, and in 7, 6. 9. 37 above) here equivalent to excellently, admirably, nobly. *Thou hast said the truth*, or more exactly, *in (or with) truth* (i. e. truly) *thou hast said*, what follows (see above, on v. 14.) Instead of three detached clauses, we have then one full one, *well and truly didst thou say that (not for) there is one* (the latest critics omit *God*, which only makes the phrase still more impressive.) This refers to the first words of our Lord's quotation, the sublime declaration of the divine unity, which the scribe then amplifies, perhaps with reference to the first commandment (Ex. 20, 3.) Not only is he one in the sense of what theologians call simplicity, i. e. without parts, division, or complexity, but also in the negative exclusive sense of onliness, *and there is no other except him*. This is far from being a mere echo or a vain repetition of the words of Moses; it is rather a profound though simple comment on them, which is continued through the following sentence.

33. And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love (his) neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.

Here again, although the scribe repeats the words which Christ had quoted, with an unimportant substitution of equivalents (*mind* for *understanding*), which may possibly belong exclusively to Mark's report, it is only for the purpose of another comment or addition, showing like the first (in the preceding verse) a more than ordinary insight into the true sense and spirit of the law, and a remarkable congeniality with Christ's own teaching upon that great subject. As before he made the unity of God exclusive of all others, so he now puts supreme love to

him in its true position, with respect to all ritual observances, not as at variance with them, or as superseding them so long as the Mosaic dispensation lasted, nor merely as superior in degree of dignity and value, but as being the soul or vital principle to which they owed whatever dignity or value they possessed, and in default of which they must be worse than worthless. *Burnt-offerings and sacrifices* are specific and generic terms, the last denoting animal or bloody offerings in general, the first the *olah* or most important species of such offerings, in which the victim was entirely consumed, and the whole work of expiation typified. Animal oblations are exclusively mentioned, not as such, but as the most important part of the sacrificial ritual, in which alone the doctrine of vicarious atonement, by the sacrifice of life for life, was typified, the vegetable offerings being simply an appendage, a distinct acknowledgment of God's propriety in all his creatures, but apart from the others, as devoid of meaning and effect as when Cain offered fruits of the earth in competition with his brother's bleeding victims (Gen. 4, 3-5. Heb. 11, 4.) The idea here is, more (i. e. intrinsically better, more acceptable to God, and more useful to the worshipper) than all the ceremonies of the law, considered in themselves and as devoid of this informing principle.

34. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him (any question.)

*Jesus seeing him that he answered* implies more than is expressed in the version *Jesus saw that he answered*, namely, that he saw his person at the same time that he searched his thoughts. *Discreetly*, in its modern usage, which is almost wholly negative, implying the avoidance of all danger by a wise precaution, falls far short of the original, which answers better to *intelligently*, meaning strictly and according to its etymology, *mind havingly*. He answered as one having *νοῦς*, intelligence or intellect, not only as a natural endowment, but in active exercise, and on the highest subjects. This high praise which, although sufficiently attested by our Lord's authority, is also justified by what is here recorded of the man's own language and deportment, is now followed by a still more interesting statement, namely, that he was not far from the kingdom of God, the best explanation of which language is the simplest and most obvious, to wit, that he was almost on the same ground with our Lord's disciples. The reference is not so much to moral dispositions as to intellectual and doctrinal perceptions. This is no assurance that the scribe was then a true believer or would finally be saved. It was rather a warning to come nearer still or rather actually enter, lest he should have cause to wish that he had still remained afar off. There is the same reticency, as to this man's subsequent career, as in the case of the young ruler (see above, on 10, 22), but with far more positive encouragement to hope that he wasulti-

mately saved. Yet these are among the very cases, of which Christ himself said, that the first would be last and the last first. (See above, on 10, 31, and compare Matt. 19, 30. 20, 16. Luke 13, 30.) With this most interesting conversation ends the series of tentative interrogations, to which the Saviour was exposed in this last visit to Jerusalem, a series progressively diminishing in malice and in craft, until the last interrogator, though a Pharisee, a Scribe, and a tempter or inquisitor, was finally pronounced by Christ himself not far from the kingdom of God; thus bringing out as the result of these experiments on his capacity and wisdom as a teacher, the remarkable fact that, while the worst of his opponents were unable to convict him of an error or betray him into a mistake, the best of them, when brought into direct communication with him on the most important subjects, found themselves almost in the position of his own disciples. Under such influences, some attractive and conciliating, some repulsive and alarming, it is not surprising that of all our Lord's opponents, whether more or less malignant and fanatical, *no one any longer* (in the Greek *no longer*) *dared to question him.*

35. And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David?

Thus far our Lord's position had been wholly a defensive one; but now he turns the tables and asks a question in his turn, not merely for the purpose of silencing his enemies, but also with a view to the assertion of his own claims as the Messiah. *Answering*, retorting their interrogations. *While he taught*, literally, *teaching*, not in private conversation, but in the course of his public and official instructions. *In the temple*, i. e. in its area or enclosure (see above, on v. 11.) *How*, in what sense, upon what ground, or by what authority. *Say*, i. e. officially, or *ex cathedra*, here equivalent to *teach*. *The scribes*, as the expounders of the law and the religious teachers of the people (see above, on 1, 22. 9, 11, and compare Matt. 23, 2.) *The Christ*, the *Messiah*, Greek and Hebrew synonyms, both meaning *Anointed*, and applied to the Prophet, Priest and King of Israel, predicted by the prophets, and expected by the people (see above, on 1, 1. 8, 29. 9, 41.) *Is*, in the doctrine of the scriptures, or *is to be*, in point of fact. *Son*, descendant, heir, *of David*, as the first and greatest theocratical sovereign (see above on 10, 47. 11, 10.)

36. For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

*For* assigns the reason of the question or the ground of the objection which it states; but the latest critics have expunged the particle. *In the Holy Spirit*, i. e. in intimate union with and under the control-

ing influence of that divine person. *My Lord*, i. e. David's, as our Saviour explicitly declares in the passages already cited; yet not of David merely as a private person, nor even as an individual king, but as representing his own royal race and the house of Israel over which it reigned. The person thus described as the superior and sovereign of David and his house and of all Israel, could not possibly be David himself, nor any of his sons and successors except one who, by virtue of his twofold nature, was at once his sovereign and his son. See Rom. 1, 3. 4. That the Lord here meant was universally identified with the Messiah by the ancient Jews, is clear, not only from their own traditions, but from Christ's assuming this interpretation as the basis of his argument to prove the Messiah's superhuman nature, and from the fact that his opponents, far from questioning this fact, were unable to answer him a word, and afraid to interrogate him further (Matt. 22, 46.) The original form of expression, in the phrase *Sit at my right hand*, is the same as in Ps. 109, 31. A seat at the right hand of a king is mentioned in the Scriptures as a place of honour, not arbitrarily, but as implying a participation in his power, of which the right hand is a constant symbol. See above, on Ps. 45, 10 (9), and compare Matt. 19, 28. The sitting posture is appropriate to kings, who are frequently described as sitting on their thrones. (Compare Ps. 29, 10.) In this case, however, the posture is of less moment than the position. Hence Stephen sees Christ *standing* at the right hand of God (Acts 7, 55. 56), and Paul simply says he is there (Rom. 8, 34.) The participation in the divine power, thus ascribed to the Messiah, is a special and extraordinary one, having reference to the total subjugation of his enemies. This idea is expressed by the figure of their being made his footstool, perhaps with allusion to the ancient practice spoken of in Josh. 10, 24. This figure itself, however, presupposes the act of sitting on a throne. It does not imply inactivity, as some suppose, or mean that Jehovah would conquer his foes for him, without any intervention of his own. The idea running through the whole psalm is, that it is in and through him that Jehovah acts for the destruction of his enemies, and that for this very end he is invested with almighty power, as denoted by his session at the right hand of God. This session is to last until the total subjugation of his enemies, that is to say, this special and extraordinary power of the Messiah is then to terminate, a representation which agrees exactly with that of Paul in 1 Cor. 15, 24-28, where the verse before us is distinctly referred to, although not expressly quoted. It is therefore needless, though grammatical, to give the *until* an inclusive meaning, namely, until then and afterwards, as in Ps. 112, 8, etc. This verse, it has been said, is more frequently quoted or referred to, in the New Testament, than any other in the Hebrew Bible. Besides the passages already cited, it lies at the foundation of all those which represent Christ as sitting at the right hand of the Father. See Matt. 26, 64. 1 Cor. 15, 25. Eph. 1, 20-22. Phil. 2, 9-11. Heb. 1, 3. 14. 8, 1, 10, 12. 13. 1 Pet. 3, 22. and compare Rev. 3, 21.

37. David therefore himself calleth him Lord, and whence is he (then) his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

*Therefore, or so then. David calls him Lord*, i. e. his own superior or rather sovereign. *Whence*, from what source, or by what means? How is he at once his superior and inferior, his son and sovereign? The only key to this enigma is the twofold nature of the Messiah as taught even in the Old Testament, and applied to the solution of this very question in the beginning of the epistle to the Romans (1, 3. 4.) But this doctrine had been lost among the Jews, and more especially among the scribes or spiritual leaders, so that to them the question was unanswerable. They still held fast however to the doctrine, that he was to be the Son of David, which indeed became a reason for their giving up the doctrine of his higher nature, as being incompatible with what the scripture taught so clearly as to his descent and lineage. It is an instructive instance of perverted ingenuity, that one of the most eminent of modern German critics and interpreters maintains that Jesus, far from admitting that the scribes were right in making Christ the Son of David, teaches here that he was not! The effect of this unanswerable question upon those to whom it was addressed, or at whom it was aimed, is said by Matthew (22, 46) to have been that no one could answer him a word, nor did any one dare from that day any more to question him. There is of course no inconsistency between this statement and the one in v. 34, above, as both occurrences took place upon the same day; and as it has been well said, while Mark exhibits him as silencing their questions. Matthew goes further and describes him as silencing their very answers. On the other hand, Mark here describes the impression which his teaching made upon the masses. *And the common people* (literally, the *much or great crowd*) *heard him gladly*, sweetly, pleasantly, with pleasure (see above, on 6, 20.)

38. And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and (love) salutations in the market-places—

The contrast, tacitly suggested in the verse preceding, is here carried out by representing Christ as warning them (the crowd who heard him gladly) against the scribes who would have silenced him. *In his doctrine*, in his teaching, as or while he taught (see above, on 1, 22. 27. 4, 2. 11, 18.) *Beware of*, literally, *see from*, not look away from, but look out from, be upon your guard against (see above, on 8, 15.) *Lore*, literally, will, choose, wish, desire. *The scribes, those (wishing)*, admits of two constructions, one of which supposes this to be descriptive of the whole class (beware of the scribes, for they love, &c.) the other only of a part (beware of those scribes who, or such scribes as, desire &c.) The proximity of this verse to the one in which our Lord himself pro-

nounced a scribe not far from the kingdom of heaven seems to recommend the latter sense in this place. He is then to be understood as giving them a test by which to regulate their trust in their religious teachers. As if he had said, ‘Some scribes are not far from the Messiah’s kingdom, while others have lost sight of his divinity; in order to distinguish between those two classes, observe which are proud and ostentatious, selfish and ambitious, in their conduct, and of these beware.’ *Clothing*, clothes, or robes, in Greek the plural of a noun originally meaning equipment, fitting out, applied both to armour and to dress, then restricted to the latter, then confined, as *dress* in English often is, to the outer garment, robe or mantle, which in the oriental costume is particularly full and flowing. *To go*, in Greek *to walk about*, suggesting the idea of a needless locomotion for the purpose of display. *Salutations*, formal ceremonious compliments, according to the oriental fashion *in the market-places*, agora or forum, as the customary places of great concourse (see above, on 6, 56. 7, 4.)

### 39. And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts.

As other objects of desire and frivolous ambition to the baser sort but probably the greater number of the scribes, he names *the first seats* (one Greek word) *in the synagogues*, or meetings for religious worship, the idea of a building being secondary and incidental (see above, on 1, 21. 23. 29. 39. 3, 1, 6, 2.) *Uppermost rooms* is a Greek word of the same form, each being compounded of a noun and the ordinal number *first*. *Rooms* here means *places*, as in our familiar phrases *make room*, *no room*, while in *good room*, *large room*, and most other combinations, it means a chamber or apartment of a house, which is the meaning probably attached to it by many English readers both in this and in several other places (e. g. Lu. 14, 9.) Even *places*, however, would not be an adequate translation here, the Greek word meaning *places to recline*, i. e. at table (see above, on 2, 15), and the whole phrase the most honourable or conspicuous of such reclining places which, according to the Greek and Roman usage, was the middle place in each *triclinium* or couch intended to be occupied by three. *Feasts*, suppers, dinners (see above, on 6, 21.)

### 40. Which devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.

While the preceding verse presents a lively but humiliating picture of the vanity and levity of these Jewish clergy or religious teachers, that before us adds a darker trait, belonging not to manners merely but to morals, or to *mores* in the higher sense. *Those devouring*, swallowing up, consuming, i. e. spending for their own advantage, *the houses*, often put for households, families, and by Xenophon and Aelian, as by Mark, Luke (20, 47), and Matthew (23, 14), for the house with its contents, and so for property in general. *Of widows*, often mentioned

in the Scriptures as the most defenceless class of poor, and therefore special objects both of divine and human pity, whose unrighteous spoliation, whether fraudulent or violent, is here mentioned as an aggravating circumstance attending the embezzlements and peculations of these worldly scribes, who may have had peculiar opportunities for such sins, as expounders of the civil no less than the ceremonial and the moral law, or as the ghostly advisers of the sick and dying, the executors of their wills and the guardians of their children, in all which capacities enormous wickedness has been committed, since these words were uttered, by a corrupted ministry and priesthood. *For a pretence making long prayers*, or more simply, *in pretence* (or as a pretext) *praying long*. The only question here is, whether these words (in themselves perspicuous enough) are to be construed with the first clause, as a further aggravation of the wickedness there mentioned (cloaking their fraud and their extortion under unusual appearances of zeal and devotion, and even using these as means to their nefarious ends), or to be taken as a new and distinct item in the catalogue (affecting such devotion in pretence, i. e. without sincerity, as hypocrites.) Both these senses being perfectly appropriate and perfectly consistent, it is better as in all such cases to combine them, and to understand our Lord as saying, that these scribes were not only hypocritical and ostentatious in their devotions, but employed this very ostentation and hypocrisy as a means of enriching themselves at the expense of the most helpless classes. So far was their religious office or profession from extenuating their guilt, that on that very ground, as a fearful aggravation, *these (pious sinners) shall receive* (not only *greater*, but *more abundant* (or *excessive*) *judgment* (righteous retribution), which in this case means of course condemnation, punishment, or execution. By these criteria, which any man was able to apply without much risk of error or injustice, he taught the people to distinguish between those scribes, probably the great mass, of whom they must beware or be even on their guard, and the few who, like the scribe in the preceding context, were already "not far from the kingdom of God," (v. 34.)

41. And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury; and many that were rich cast in much.

By a perfectly natural association, the evangelist might here have added, as a sort of contrast to the picture of these hypocrites devouring widows' houses, that of a poor widow, perhaps thus impoverished, giving her remaining mite to God, even if the incident itself had happened at some other time. But as Mark and Luke (21, 1-4) both give it in the same connection, passing over, as it were, for the purpose, the extended report of Christ's discourse against the Scribes and Pharisees preserved by Matthew (23, 13-39), and as the other incidents of this eventful week, so far as we can judge, are chronologically ordered, it is much the most probable as well as the most pleasing supposition, that soon after he had uttered this same denunciation against clerical

plunderers of widows houses, he beheld a widow in the very act of doing what was diametrically opposite. Mark, as usual, imparts to us a clear though brief glimpse of the outward situation. *And Jesus sitting*, or having sat down, perhaps at the close of the discourse recorded briefly here and in full detail by Matthew, *over against*, opposite, in front of, *the treasury*, a name given by the rabbins to thirteen chests called trumpets from their shape, which stood in the court of the women, but applied by John (8, 20), either to the court itself, or to some other large apartment of the temple, in which Christ addressed the people upon that occasion and perhaps on this, although the word *treasury* here means, not the court or room, but the receptacle within it, in which sense Josephus also used it, in saying that the golden vine presented to the temple by Agrippa was suspended over the treasury. The treasuries or store-rooms, mentioned by the same writer in the plural number, have respect to the siege of the city by the Romans, when the citizens deposited their goods for safety in the chambers which surrounded or adjoined the courts of the temple. *Beheld how* denotes a more particular and curious inspection than would have been expressed by the usual word *saw*. The verb itself means to survey or contemplate as a spectacle, and implies a close observation of the manner as well as of the general fact of contribution. *The people*, crowd, or multitude, as a promiscuous mass, without distinction of rank or wealth. *Cast*, casts, the present tense as usual exhibiting the scene as actually passing. *Money*, literally, *brass* or *copper* (see above, on 6, 8.) It appears from what is here said, that the contribution was not only in a public place but open to inspection as to what each person gave. *And many rich (men) cast (in) many (things or coins) or large (sums.)*

42. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

There is something very striking in the form of the original, though not in strict accordance with our idiom. *And coming one poor widow*, the very numeral implying loneliness, a trait obliterated by translating it as an indefinite article or pronoun (*a* or *a certain*), *cast (in) two mites, or lepta*, meaning very small coin, or the smallest then in circulation. Mark explains the Greek term by a Latin one (*κοδράντης, quadrans*) denoting the fourth part of a Roman *as*, which was itself the tenth part of the *denarius* or silver penny mentioned in v. 15 above. The widow's mite was therefore about the fifth part of a cent, and her whole contribution about two fifths. The value is only of importance as showing upon how minute a gift our Lord pronounced this splendid panegyric, which might well be envied by a Croesus or a Rothschild. It is a quaint but fine remark of Bengel, that instead of merely mentioning the sum (*a quadrans*), Mark gives the pieces that composed it, one of which the widow might have kept, instead of casting both into the treasury.

43. And he called (unto him) his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily, I say unto you, That this poor widow

hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury.

Not content with noticing this humble benefaction for himself, our blessed Lord directs the attention of his disciples to it also. *Verily (amen) I say unto you*, his accustomed formula in introducing something solemn and important, or, as in this case, strange and unexpected. *More than all those casting into the treasury* on this occasion. In the last verse he explains the principle or gives the key to this paradoxical assertion, namely, that the value of such gifts is to be estimated, not only by the motive, which he takes for granted, or leaves out of the account as too notorious to be overlooked, but by the cost or sacrifice which it involves.

44. For all (they) did cast in of their abundance: but she of her want did cast in all that she had, (even) all her living.

*For all they*, meaning either all the rich expressly mentioned in v. 41, with whom the widow is contrasted in the next verse, or all the rest, as being richer than herself and therefore sacrificing less in their donations. *Of their abundance*, out of that abounding (or remaining over) to them. *But she*, or as it may be rendered *this (one) or this (woman,) of her want*, out of her deficiency, the noun corresponding to the verb employed in 10, 21, and there explained. *All that she had*, in Greek still more expressive, *all (things) whatsoever (or as many as) she had*. *All her living*, the whole life of her, in which sense *life* is used occasionally elsewhere. (Luke 8, 43. 15, 12. 30.) Strong as these expressions are, they do not necessarily mean any thing more than that she gave all then at her disposal or command, all that she might have spent for her subsistence.

### CHAPTER XIII.

Having publicly assumed his Messianic office and begun to exercise its powers; having defined his position with respect to the existing theocratical authorities, and by his last discourse cut off all hope of further tolerance or reconciliation; our Lord now bids farewell to the temple with a solemn prophecy of its destruction, addressed to his disciples, who inquire as to the time and the premonitory signs of this great catastrophe (1-4.) This gives occasion to a long prophetic discourse, in which he first tells them what are not signs of the end (5-13), and then what are (14-33), closing with an exhortation to perpetual vigilance and readiness for his appearance (34-37.) As no part of scripture has been more variously explained than this, with its parallels in Luke and Matthew, it will be well before attempting to interpret the details, to exhibit briefly some of the more general hypotheses by which their meaning is determined, and to discriminate between what is agreed upon as certain and what is more or less the

subject of dispute. The starting point of all discussion on the subject is the universally admitted fact, that we have here an express prediction of the destruction of the temple by the Romans. This is granted, even by the infidel who looks upon it as a happy accident, a chance-coincidence, and by the sceptic who regards it as a prophecy *ex eventu*. Some go further and suppose the destruction of Jerusalem to be the subject of the whole discourse; but this requires the assumption of so many hyperbolical expressions, and such a violent construction of the terms apparently referring to remoter changes, that the great mass of interpreters admit the coexistence of two great themes in this context, the destruction of the temple and the end of the world or the present state of things. It then becomes a question how these topics stand related to each other, as to which point there are two main theories, each of which is variously modified. The first is, that these two great subjects are distinctly and successively presented, so that the interpreter can separate them from each other; the second, that they are promiscuously blended, or at least continually interchanged and intermingled, so that such a separation is extremely difficult if not impossible. Of those who take the first view, some suppose the one theme to be finally disposed of, before the other is introduced at all, but differ much as to the precise point of transition, though the greater number fix it either at v. 14 or v. 24 of this chapter (and the corresponding parts of Luke and Matthew.) But as some things in each of the divisions thus obtained seem to be more appropriate to the other, many interpreters assume an inverted order of the topics, or a return to the first after the second is disposed of, or a still more complicated scheme, in which the *signs* of each event are stated in succession, and then the *times* in the same order. These inconveniences, as well as other more important reasons, have induced some of the best modern writers to regard both themes as running through the whole discourse, but still with great diversity of judgment as to their precise mutual relation. Some regard this as a typical one, the destruction of Jerusalem prefiguring that of the whole world hereafter. Another theory is the perspective one, according to which nearer and remoter events are presented like the objects in a landscape, without chronological specification of the intervals between them. A third modification of this same hypothesis is that of sequences or cycles, the same prophecy receiving not a gradual fulfilment merely, which is an assumption common to several of the theories already mentioned, but a series or succession of complete fulfilments upon different scales and under different circumstances. Even this incomplete enumeration will suffice to show the vast variety of plausible hypotheses devised to facilitate the exposition of this difficult and interesting passage, a variety susceptible of only one solution, namely, that the prophecy itself has been but partially fulfilled, and that the unfulfilled part, from the very nature and design of prophecy, cannot be fully understood, or even certainly distinguished as literal or figurative, until the event shall make it clear. Every prediction which has been fulfilled was equally mysterious beforehand, for example those of Christ's first advent, scarcely one of which was not suscepti-

ble of two or more interpretations till he actually came; and the same thing may be looked for in the predictions of his second coming. It is the part of wisdom, therefore, not to attempt what is impossible, the anticipation of things yet to be developed, but to ascertain, as far as may be, what has been verified already, and to be contented, as to the remainder, with a careful explanation of the terms employed, according to analogy and usage, and a reverential waiting for ulterior disclosures by the light of divine providence shining on the word. Among the incidental but important questions raised in this discussion, one of the most difficult and interesting has respect to the apparent nearness of the two events as here predicted, and the mode of reconciling this representation with the truth of history and our Lord's omniscience. This is a difficulty not confined to any one hypothesis, but pressing more or less on all which recognize a real prophecy with two distinguishable themes or subjects. To this point, as well as to the general question, upon what hypothesis or principle the passage is to be explained, there will be constant reference in the following detailed examination of the chapter.

1. And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings (are here !)

*And he departing* (going forth) *out of the temple* (or sacred enclosure), not merely leaving it for the night (as in 11, 11. 19), but going finally away from it, an idea still more clearly expressed by Matthew (24, 1.) *One of his disciples*, probably Peter speaking for the rest, who are mentioned collectively by Matthew, and indefinitely by Luke (21, 5.) *Master* (i. e. teacher), *see*, not as if he now surveyed them for the first time, but as a natural and child-like expression of their own surprise and admiration, which may have been uttered before, but only recorded here, because of the remarkable discourse to which it gave occasion. *What manner*, i. e. what sort or kind, the phrase always used to represent this Greek word in our version (compare Matt. 8, 27. Luke 1, 29. 7, 39. 2 Pet. 3, 11. 1 John 3, 1.) As the words are not a question but an exclamation, there is no need of completing the sentence by supplying any thing. *What stones! what buildings!* Josephus gives a lively and it might almost seem extravagant account of the materials used in Herod's renovation of the temple, which he describes as marble blocks of dazzling whiteness and enormous size, some being twenty-five feet long, twelve high, and eight wide. *Buildings*, in the plural, means not merely the sanctuary (see above, on 11, 11), but the courts with their porches and adjoining chambers some of which were very spacious. The temple originally built by Solomon (1 Kings 6, 37. 38), and destroyed 400 years after by Nebuzaradan, general of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (2 Kings 25, 9), was rebuilt after long delays and interruptions by the restored Jews under Persian auspices and finished in the year 515 B. C. (Ezra 6, 15.) This structure, which appears to have been much inferior ex-

ternally to Solomon's (Hagg. 2, 3), was renewed by Herod the Great piecemeal, one part remaining while another was rebuilt, so as to preserve its moral and historical identity, perhaps on account of the prediction (Hagg. 2, 7-9. Mal. 3, 1.) Hence it is always known in history not as the third but as the second temple. Herod, with whom the love of art and especially of ornamental architecture was a ruling passion, after decorating and rebuilding many towns and cities both in Palestine and other countries, seems to have chosen for the occupation of his last years the renewal of the temple, in a style of architecture no doubt far superior to that of Solomon, when measured by the classical or Grecian standard. John represents the Jews indeed as saying that the work had then been going on forty-six years (John 2, 20), i. e. from the time of its original inception, but no doubt with many interruptions and suspensions, though Josephus speaks of eight years during which ten thousand men were constantly employed upon it. The separate mention of the *stones* is thought by some to imply that the work of renovation was still going on and the materials lying about, singly or in masses. The admiration here expressed by the disciples did not spring from ignorance or want of taste, but from the natural impression made even on untutored minds by architectural magnificence.

2. And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Nothing can be more natural than this question as a preparation for the prophecy that follows, as if he had said, 'Stable and secure as these splendid edifices now appear to you.' The same essential meaning is expressed, but less emphatically, by the affirmative construction (*thou seest.*) *Left*, not left behind, which is expressed by a different Greek verb (as in 10, 7. 12, 19), but let alone or left *in statu quo*. *Stone upon stone*, the literal translation, is equally good English and more pointed than the common version. *Shall not*, twice repeated, is the peculiarly expressive Greek negation by the aorist subjunctive which excludes all possible contingencies. *Thrown down*, so translated only here and in the parable (Matt. 24, 2. Luke 21, 6); elsewhere *destroyed* (see below, on 14, 58. 15, 29), *come to nought*, *overthrow* (Acts 5, 38. 39), and once *dissolved* (2 Cor. 5, 1), the nearest approximation to the strict sense, which is that of loosening, separating the parts, a term peculiarly appropriate to such a total ruin as the one here predicted. This verb, and the phrase *stone upon stone*, have been preserved in all the three accounts, no doubt because the Saviour uttered these very words or their exact equivalents.

3. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, over against the temple, Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, asked him privately,

On his way from Jerusalem to Bethany, which lay across the mount of Olives, he appears to have sat down on the mountain's brow to rest or to take another view of the city, which from that point lay spread out before him like a map or picture. *He sitting (thus) over against (directly opposite) the temple*, which was on the east side of the city, next the mount of Olives, and separated from it only by the narrow brook or dell called Kedron (John 18, 1.) The position here assigned to Christ and his disciples is not only striking in itself, but suited to enhance the grandeur of the prophetic discourse that follows. Mark alone names the four disciples, who are no other than the two pairs of brothers first called to attend the Saviour (see above, on 1, 16-20), two of whom (Andrew and John) had left John the Baptist to follow him (John 1, 37), and three of whom (Peter, James and John) had already been distinguished from the rest on more than one occasion (see above, on 5, 37. 9, 2.) *Privately* (in private or apart) might seem to mean apart from the other nine apostles; but as Matthew (24, 3) still says *the disciples*, it is probable that the four are only mentioned as particularly earnest in making this inquiry, although speaking with and for the rest.

4. Tell us, when shall these things be? and what (shall be) the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

*Tell us* more than this, or over and above this, as if what he had just said only served to whet their curiosity or appetite for information. The assurance that this strange event would certainly take place made them only the more anxious to know when, and by what tokens it would be preceded. *These things*, the changes just predicted, the destruction of the temple with all that it involved or presupposed or carried with it as its necessary consequences. *Shall be*, happen, come to pass, though not the verb so rendered elsewhere but the simple verb of existence. *Shall be*, at the time of the event, or *is now* as a matter of prediction and divine appointment. This *shall be* is supplied by the translators; that in the last clause is expressed in the original, but by a verb denoting simple futurition, which can be rendered into English only by the phrase, *about to be fulfilled*. Some understand this to mean *when all these (things)*, i. e. the temple and its appurtenances, or the world itself, *are about to be finished*, i. e. abolished or destroyed; but there is no instance of this sense in the New Testament, unless it be the doubtful one in Rom. 9, 28, where it is quoted from the Septuagint version of Isai. 10, 22. It rather means either when these predictions are about to be fulfilled, or still more probably, when this existing state of things, this system or this dispensation, is about to be completed, wound up, brought to a conclusion (compare Matt. 24, 3.) *The sign*, token, or premonitory indication, either in the general sense in which all great events or changes may be said to have their signs, or in the special sense of a prophetic sign, or one event predicted to ensure the occurrence of another. The two questions may be taken as equivalent expressions for the same thing,

when will it be, and how are we to know when it will be? or as two distinct inquiries, the first relating to the time and the second to the premonitions. It is plain, however, that even if the questions be distinct, they have relation to the same event, and that the disciples looked for the destruction of the temple, which their Lord had just predicted, as a part of that great winding up, denouement, or catastrophe, which they were already accustomed to associate with the erection of Messiah's kingdom.

5. And Jesus answering them, began to say, Take heed lest any (man) deceive you.

*Began to say* is always something more than *said* (see above, on 1, 45. 12, 1), and seems here to imply that what he said was not restricted to a single topic, that he first spoke of one thing and then proceeded to another. This is the more probable because our Lord, instead of beginning with the signs or premonitions of his second coming, as many seem to think he does, and as the twelve may have expected, begins by telling what was not to be so reckoned, although apt to be mistaken for the signs in question. But (instead of stating these signs first) *he began by saying* (something very different.) *Take heed*, literally, *look (out)*, *see (to it)*, *be on your guard* (see above, on 8, 15. 12, 38.) *Lest any (man)*, or *any (one)*, *mislead you*, *make you err* or *wander from the truth or from the path of duty*. The divine wisdom of the Saviour and his knowledge of the perils which beset his followers are strikingly exemplified in this preliminary warning against error and delusion, this exposure of false signs before giving a description of the true. This method of proceeding is the more remarkable because the course suggested by fanatical excitement is the very opposite, and even wise men who devote themselves to such inquiries are too prone to look exclusively at what is positive in Christ's instructions, without heeding this preliminary admonition, or even observing that his purpose in this first part of his discourse is not to tell what are but what are not the premonitions of the great catastrophe to which he here refers, whatever it may be.

6. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am (Christ), and shall deceive many.

*For* (introducing the ground or reason of this unexpected warning) *many will come in my name*, a very common phrase in the New Testament and used repeatedly in this gospel (see above, on 9, 37. 38. 39. 41. 11, 9. 10, and below, on 16, 17), but here in a stronger sense than usual to denote, not mere profession or commission or dependence, but a literal assumption of another's name or personation of him, as appears from what follows, *saying (that) I am*, i. e. *I am Christ*, as expressed by Matthew (24, 5), and correctly supplied here by the translators. (See the similar expression used above in 6, 50, and there explained.) This description would include *false Messiahs*, i. e.

such as claimed to be the true Messiah in opposition to our Lord, and *false Christs*, i. e. such as claimed to be himself, returned again according to his promise. The latter sense is certainly the most appropriate in this connection, where he is not speaking to the Jews who doubted or denied his Messiahship, but to his own disciples who had solemnly acknowledged it (see above, on 8, 29), and who were much less in danger of deception by the claims of any new competitor than by a personation of the Lord himself. But when was this fulfilled? We have no historical account of false Messiahs or false Christs, in either of the senses just explained, before the downfall of Jerusalem; whereas there are reckoned more than fifty false Messiahs since that time among the Jews, from Bar Cochba in the second century to Sabbatai Zebhi in the seventeenth; and among the Christians various fanatics and impostors have directly or indirectly claimed to be our Lord himself, in one sense or another. This is one of the chief difficulties which attend the exclusive application of this part of the discourse to the destruction of Jerusalem, or the period immediately preceding it; to overcome which those who advocate that view are under the necessity of assuming, without evidence from history, that the prophecy was verified, or of reckoning as false Christs some who were only false prophets or false teachers or fanatical impostors, such as Simon Magus, Elymas, Theudas, Judas the Gaulonite, Dositheus, Menander, Cerinthus, and others; no one of whom is known to have assumed that sacred name and character. Some escape the difficulty by applying this particular prediction to a later period, and others, as we have already seen, by giving a wide scope to the whole discourse, and making this part comprehend all false pretensions of the kind in question, from the date of the prediction to the end of time.

7. And when ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled; for (such things) must needs be, but the end (shall) not (be) yet.

Having told them that the mere assumption of his name, or profession of identity with him, however many might attempt it, would be no sign of his actual return, he now points out another false sign of a very different nature, not dependent upon human cunning or imposture, but on the misapprehension of God's providence by believers themselves. *When ye hear* (not *shall hear*, which is too exclusive, though the reference is really to the future) *wars and rumours* (literally, *hearings*) *of wars*, which some suppose to mean the same thing, the second phrase being added to explain how wars could be heard, *when ye hear wars, even (or that is) rumours of wars*. But most interpreters suppose two different objects to be here distinguished; either wars immediately at hand the sound of which is heard directly, and those more remote which are known only by report; or actual wars, such as have already broken out, and threatened or inchoate wars, of which rumour gives premonitory notice. *Be ye not troubled*, agitated, filled with consternation, as if these commotions necessarily imply the

imminence of some great catastrophe or of the final consummation. The necessity of this caution, not to the first disciples merely but to their successors, is abundantly apparent from the well-known fact that pious men in every age have been continually falling into this mistake. It would be easy to evince, by a catena of quotations from the earlier and later fathers, from the medieval writers, the reformers, and the protestant divines of the last three centuries, that this propensity to look on national commotions and collisions as decisive proof that the world is near its end, has never been extinguished in the church. There are no doubt truly devout Christians at this moment drawing such conclusions from the mutiny in India and the war in China, in direct opposition to our Lord's command, which, even if directly applied only to the first disciples and their times, involves a principle admitting of a no less certain application to ourselves and our times. The meaning is not that such changes may not be immediately succeeded by the greatest change of all, but only that they are no sign of it, and ought not to be so regarded.

8. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be earthquakes in (divers) places, and there shall be famines, and troubles : these (are) the beginnings of sorrows.

The first clause of this verse simply represents as certain what had only been referred to as a possible or probable contingency. 'I say this because national disturbances not only may but will occur, and you will therefore be in danger of this very error.' *Rise*, or retaining the emphatic passive form, *will be roused* (see above, on 1, 31. 4, 27. 5, 41. 6, 14. 12, 26, and compare the illustration drawn from such events in 3, 24.) The next clause extends what has just been said of national commotions to physical calamities and social troubles, *earthquakes*, *famines* and *disturbances*, which last word seems to mean internal troubles, such as riots and rebellions, as distinguished from foreign or international collisions ; but the word is omitted by the latest critics because wanting in several of the oldest manuscripts and versions. The textual question is of less importance, as the enumeration of particulars is not intended to exhaust but to exemplify the general idea of commotions and calamities, from which the followers of Christ would be tempted to expect his speedy re-appearance. This mistake is not theoretical but practical, because it confounds the beginning with the end of a disciplinary process, and unnerves men for exertion and endurance, by the hope of speedy or immediate respite, when a long course of trial and of suffering is still before them. This idea, which was negatively brought out in the last clause of the verse preceding, is positively brought out in the last clause of the one before us, where the original order of the words is peculiarly significant and striking. *Beginnings* (not endings, as you may hastily conclude) *of throes* (or *pangs*) *are these (things)*. There is also wonderful signification in the

second noun, which properly denotes, not sorrows or pains in general, but the pangs of childbirth in particular, a figure often used in scripture to describe not mere intensity of suffering, but also the accessory ideas of its being sudden, temporary, and productive of some new result. Hence it is never applied to the torments of the damned nor even to the life-long sorrows of the present state, but only to intense yet momentary pains preceding some extraordinary change for the better or the worse (compare Isai. 26, 17. John 16, 21. 1 Thess. 5, 3.) Here again it is difficult to find in contemporary history a state of things answering to this description before the downfal of Jerusalem, the Roman empire being then at peace and the provincial wars of which we read too insignificant and local to exhaust the meaning of this terribly sublime description.

9. But take heed to yourselves ; for they shall deliver you up to councils, and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten, and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.

The double pronoun in the first clause is peculiarly emphatic, *but see ye to yourselves*, implying a return from more remote anticipations or predictions to his immediate hearers. As if he had said, ‘but while these dangers will exist for ages and these errors be committed by many generations of those who shall succeed you, there are others still more imminent, affecting you as individuals, and calling for the utmost care and circumspection to avoid them.’ These were the dangers of immediate persecution to which the apostles would be soon exposed, of arraignment before councils or tribunals, whether national or local, with personal maltreatment of a painful and disgraceful kind, but with the accompanying opportunity of bearing witness to the truth and to their master before civil rulers of the highest rank. The indefinite construction, *they shall deliver you*, is equivalent in sense, though not in form, to the passive, *ye shall be delivered*. The verb does not of itself denote treacherous betrayal, but simply transfer or delivery into the power of another, and especially of magistrates or executioners (Luke 12, 58.) *Couneils, synedria*, a word corresponding in its etymology to *sessions* and *consistories*, or meetings where men *sit together* for some common purpose, and especially for consultation or deliberation upon public business. An Aramaic corruption of this Greek word (*Sanhedrin*) was used to designate the national council of the Jews, composed of priests, scribes, and elders of the people (see above, on 8, 31. 11, 27); but the word itself may have been extended to the local courts of justice. *In* (literally *into*) *the synagogues*, which some philologists regard as a mere interchange of particles, but others as a *constructio prægnans*, in which previous entrance is implied though not expressed. *Into the synagogues ye shall be* (taken and) beaten, or scourged in the severest manner (see above, on 12, 3, 5.) *Synagogues* is here to be taken in its proper sense of public meetings, chiefly for religious worship, at which

the Jewish traditions also represent such punishments as having been inflicted, not as religious or ecclesiastical penalties, but for the sake of greater publicity, as secular notices in England are in certain cases published in the churches, or at least upon the church-doors. *Before*, a Greek preposition idiomatically used to signify judicial or forensic appearance in the presence of a magistrate, a neglect of which idiom has obscured the sense in our translation of Matt. 28, 14. *Rulers* (leaders, governors) and *kings*, here put for the highest class of civil magistrates or rulers. *Shall be brought*, literally, *stood*, or made to stand (as in 9, 36) as culprits or offenders. *For my sake*, or *on my account*, i. e. because ye are my followers and bear my name, diffuse my doctrines and promote my cause. *For a testimony* to the true religion and the claims of Christ as the Messiah. *Against them*, or more exactly, *to them*, i. e. the rulers just referred to, without indicating the effect upon them. This prediction was fulfilled in the apostles, as we know from the example of the only ones whose history has been recorded (see Acts 4, 8. 5, 27. 12. 3. 16, 20. 17, 19. 18, 12. 22, 30. 24, 1. 25, 2. 26, 1. 2 Tim. 4, 16.) There is no need therefore of extending the immediate application of the words beyond them.

10. And the gospel must first be published among all nations.

As the corresponding part of Matthew (24, 14) occurs later in our Lord's discourse, some consider it misplaced in Mark's account; but as all the manuscripts assign it this position, we must regard it as at least appropriate, if not actually uttered in this connection. Nor is there any incongruity or incoherence in this collocation, since the next verse may be taken as a natural recurrence to the present or the proximate future, after referring to that more remote. *And to (or into) all nations*, an indefinite expression answering to *generally, everywhere*, wherever it is meant to be diffused, in opposition to a merely local proclamation, *must first*, i. e. first of all, as the great end to be secured, and as a necessary consequence before you can expect your efforts or your sufferings to cease. *Be published*, heralded, proclaimed, *the gospel*, standing emphatically at the end, i. e. the glad news of my advent and salvation. Even in reference to the agency of the apostles, this was substantially fulfilled in a very general extension of the church before the downfall of Jerusalem.

11. But when they shall lead (you), and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate, but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.

The exhortation to be confident and undismayed is now put into the peculiar but expressive form of a command not even to premeditate what they should say in self-defence before the magistrates and rulers

previously mentioned. *They, indefinitely, as in v. 9. Lead you and deliver you,* in Greek, *lead you delivering*, the pronoun standing in the same relation to the verb and participle, which together express a simultaneous action. *To take thought*, in old English, is not merely to think, but to be anxious or solicitous, which is also the meaning of the Greek verb here. *Shall be given, or more exactly, may be given*, a construction strongly expressive of contingency. *In that hour, or time* (see above, on 6, 35. 11, 11), i. e. when you are thus delivered and arraigned. *That* (literally, *this*) *speak* (and nothing else); it is not merely an encouraging assurance, but a positive command to mix nothing of their own with what was thus communicated to them. The same remark applies to the next clause, *ye are not the (persons) speaking, but (it is) the Holy Spirit.* This means, not simply that the Holy Spirit would provide for them and spare them the necessity of self-defence, but also that they must not interfere with this mysterious advocate, but look upon themselves as nothing more than vehicles or channels of his revelations.

12. Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son, and children shall rise up against (their) parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

This verse carries out the idea of the ninth with a fearful definiteness and distinctness, by explaining the vague subject of the verb there, as including not only enemies but friends, the nearest friends. In other words, they must prepare themselves for the disruption of the tenderest ties. *Now* may seem to introduce an argument or indicate a change of topic; but in Greek it is the usual connective ( $\delta\epsilon$ ) elsewhere rendered *and* or *but*. The nouns in the original are without the article, which not only adds to the rapidity and vigour of the sentence, but brings out the different relations more distinctly and vividly, *brother and brother, father and son, children and parents.* *Betray* is the same verb that is translated *deliver up* in vs. 9. 11, and is used here in precisely the same sense. There is a needless and enfeebling circumlocution in the version of the last clause, which means simply, *they will kill them (or put them to death.)* The whole verse is merely an amplification of the ground or reason of the exhortation at the beginning of v. 9. *But ye, take heed to yourselves*, for dangerous and trying times are just before you.

13. And ye shall be hated of all (men) for my name's sake; but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

This verse caps the climax of anticipated horrors by requiring them to be prepared not only for unnatural but universal hatred, founded not upon any thing belonging to themselves, but on that which might have been expected to protect them, their relation to their master. *For (or on account of) my name*, not only because you bear it and invoke it,

but because of all that it expresses and implies. In a word, he exhorts them to prepare for the worst, but at the same time assures them that *the (one) persevering and enduring* (for the Greek verb expresses both ideas) *to the end*, not a fixed point but a relative expression (as in v. 7), meaning the extreme or uttermost of the trials through which any one is called to pass, *shall be saved*, rescued, finally delivered from them. He promises them no exemption from the common lot, but rather intimates peculiar trials, both in kind and in degree, yet with the cheering promise of escape at last. Here again the terms of the prediction, although in themselves appropriate to the apostles and to some extent realized in their experience, seem intended to embrace a wider scope and to provide for a variety of other cases. What is most important to observe, however, is, that here ends the negative part of Christ's discourse, in which he shows them what are not the signs for which they asked, and teaches them that neither the assumption of his name, nor wars, nor international commotions, nor intestine strife, nor providential calamities, nor persecution, nor the severing of the nearest ties, nor the hatred of Christ's followers for his own sake, however dreadful in themselves, are any sign of his approach, to put an end to the existing state of things ; for through all these men may pass uninjured and survive them.

14. But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not—let him that readeth understand—then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains :

Here begins the positive part of his discourse, or his direct answer to the question of the four disciples in v. 4. *But* may here have its proper adversative force, equivalent to saying, *on the other hand*, *when ye shall see*, or more exactly, *when ye see*, another aorist subjunctive (see above, on v. 7), *the abomination of desolation* (*or the desolating abomination*), an expression borrowed from the prophet Daniel (9, 27), and applied in the Apocrypha (1 Macc. 1, 54) to the sacrilegious profanation of the altar by Antiochus Epiphanes. The first noun in Hebrew denotes originally any thing disgusting or revolting, but is specially applied in usage to objects of religious abhorrence, and especially to every thing connected with idolatry and heathenism. The epithet attached to it means wasting, desolating, and is particularly used to denote the devastations incident to war. The combination of the two suggests the complex idea of a heathen conquest, which, to the vast majority of readers in all ages, has appeared peculiarly expressive of the Roman triumph over Israel and destruction of the Holy City under Titus (compare Luke 21, 20), although some have ingeniously attempted to explain it of moral and religious depravation from within. *The (one) spoken of by Daniel the prophet* is excluded by the latest critics as an unauthorized assimilation to the text of Matthew (24, 15.) *Standing where it ought not* (*or must not*), i. e. in a holy place as here expressed by Matthew

(24, 15.) *Let the (one) reading attend (or understand),* a parenthetical command, referred by some to Christ himself, in which case it is a monition to the readers of the prophet, and would here be out of place, unless the reference to Daniel be a part of the true text. Another explanation, which may be said to be a favourite with the modern writers, understands this clause as an interjectional suggestion of the evangelist himself, directing the attention of the reader to this remarkable quotation and prediction. But why should both evangelists make the same interjectional suggestion at the same place, without any thing in Christ's words to occasion it? As to the mention of the prophet Daniel, it is not absolutely needed to give meaning to the admonition, since every Jewish hearer would at once recognize it as a citation of a well-known passage in a well-known prophet. Or if the admonition does necessarily imply a previous mention of the prophet, it furnishes an argument of no small weight in favour of the *textus receptus*. As a signal instance of perverted ingenuity it may be mentioned, that one of the earlier neologists of Germany explained this as a caution to the reader against thinking this the genuine and proper sense of Daniel's language! *Then,* in that case, you will have seen a sign at last of my approach, and may begin to act accordingly. *Then let the (disciples) in Judea flee (escape)* into the mountains or the highlands of the interior (see above, on 3, 13. 5, 5), as the Christians in the siege of Jerusalem, according to Eusebius, did flee beyond them to Pella, on the northern frontier of Perea. The full force of this exhortation cannot be perceived except by viewing it in contrast with the former part of the discourse, in which he accumulates what seem to be sufficient causes of alarm and flight, but only to forbid them. 'Though thousands should appear professing to be Christ, though every nation in the world should be involved in war, though all the ties of nature should be broken, and though men should hate me so intensely as to persecute you purely upon my account, no matter, remain quiet, "in your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21, 19.) These are fearful evils and will lead to dreadful suffering, but they are not signs of my appearing. But when you see a heathen host triumphant upon sacred ground, then, then flee from Judea to the mountains, for a great catastrophe is then at hand.'

15. 16. And let him that is on the house-top not go down into the house, neither enter (therein), to take any thing out of his house ; and let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.

These are mere amplifications of the precept to make haste, drawn in part from oriental usage. *The house-top* (literally, *dome*, which originally meant a building, then a roof, and now a round roof), is here the flat roof of the east, often resorted to for sleep, retirement, prayer, or recreation, and communicating with the street or field by stairs upon the outside, to which some suppose allusion here, while others understand it as an exhortation to escape by flight along the tops of the con-

tiguous houses to the city wall, in either case without descending into the interior of the dwelling, even for the most necessary purpose. The same idea of extreme haste is vividly excited by the image of the husbandman or farmer fleeing from the field without returning to that part of it (or to the house) where he has laid aside his upper garment. *The (one) being in the field*, literally, *into it*, i. e. who has gone (and still remains) there.

17. But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

The same impression of extreme haste and confused flight is now heightened by an exclamation of compassion for those who are retarded even by the tenderest affections and the most beloved encumbrances. *Woe to* is here equivalent to *alas for*, as an expression not of wrath but pity. *Those with child* (literally, *having in the womb*), because unfit to travel; *suckling* (giving suck), because unable to escape without abandoning their infants. *In those days*, i. e. when the sign of this great revolution shall appear.

18. And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.

The same impression is still further strengthened by exhorting them to pray, thus suggesting their absolute dependence upon God for such a mercy, that these premonitory signs may be so ordered as to time, that their flight may not be hindered by the season or the weather, the Greek word signifying properly a storm, and then the stormy season or the winter. These four verses (15-18) contain no new information or prediction, but merely serve to enforce and amplify the precept in the last clause of v. 14, and in conjunction with it to convey the strongest possible impression of urgent danger and precipitate escape.

19. For (in) those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

All this implies that the evils thus to be escaped must be extraordinary both in kind and in degree, which implication is now exchanged for a direct assertion, in a hyperbolical but not fictitious form, that the distress against which they are here warned, and from which they are instructed here to save themselves, would be without a parallel in human history. Although it is not absolutely necessary to attach the strongest meaning to these strong expressions, it is certainly desirable to understand them strictly if we can, and thus avoid the disadvantage which always accompanies the process of extenuating and diluting the expressions even of uninspired and human speakers. Now it is, to say the least, a singular coincidence that the contemporary narratives of the Jewish War, the siege of Jerusalem, its capture, and the sufferings incident to both, describe the latter in such terms as make our Lord's

prediction any thing but hyperbolical in form or substance. Referring the reader for details to Josephus, and to those modern writers who have wrought up his materials in other forms, we may simply say on the authority of these contemporary statements which there seems to be no reason for disputing or at least no means of refuting, that there probably has never been so great an amount of human suffering from physical and moral causes, within so short a time and so confined a space, as in the last siege of Jerusalem by Titus. This not only serves to vindicate our Lord's prediction from the imputation of extravagance, but also to restrict its application to that great event, the history of which by an independent Jewish writer, with the best imaginable opportunities of information, so remarkably illustrates and confirms his language.

20. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved ; but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

As if even this comparison with other times of suffering were not enough, our Lord adds the finishing stroke to his appalling picture, by declaring that distresses so intense would be too much for human weakness to endure, unless contracted by a special divine interposition. *Except that* (literally *if not*, unless) *the Lord*, the Sovereign God, Jehovah (see above on 12, 29, 37), *had shortened*, docked, curtailed, a Greek verb primarily signifying amputation or mutilation of the limbs of animals, and here applied, by a lively figure, to the abbreviation of a period of time; not to the shortening of the several days, as some suppose, but to that of their aggregate amount. *No flesh*, no human life, with distinct allusion to its frailty and infirmity, *should be*, (or rather *could be*) *saved*, i. e. delivered from destruction. But this condition is complied with. *For the sake of* (or on account of) *the elect* (or chosen ones), not those of men, but those whom God has chosen to be thus excepted. *Hath shortened the days*, in his own purpose, which secures their being actually shortened hereafter.

21. And then, if any man shall say to you, Lo, here (is) Christ, or lo, (he is) there, believe (him) not.

*And then*, at that time also, i. e. at the time of extreme suffering just described, or at a period immediately succeeding it, no less than at the time referred to in vs. 5, 6, whether earlier or later, there will be danger of delusion from false Christs and false prophets. *If any (one)*, any person, any body, man or woman, *say to you, Lo* (behold, look, see) *here (is) the Christ* (or the Messiah), or *lo there* (he is), *believe not* (him or it), the man himself or what he says to you. This seems to imply that the coming of Christ, the signs of which had just been given (vs. 14-20), was not to be a visible personal appearance; for if it had been, the declaration, he is here, or he is there, would not have been necessarily and invariably false, and the disciples could not

have been charged to disbelieve it, from whatever quarter it proceeded. This consideration, taken in connection with the wonderful coincidence, already spoken of, between the previous description and occurrences attending the destruction of Jerusalem, seems to establish the important fact, that in a part at least of this prophetic discourse, the coming of Christ is an invisible impersonal one, and that any teaching to the contrary, respecting the destruction of Jerusalem, might be rejected as delusive and unauthorized.

22. For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if (it were) possible, even the elect.

As the preceding admonition was conditional in form (*if any one say*), and might therefore seem to be suggestive merely of a possible contingency, the fact is now explicitly affirmed, that such impostors would undoubtedly appear, with the remarkable addition, that their claims would be supported by miraculous credentials. *Signs and wonders* is a common phrase for miracles, exhibiting them under the two-fold aspect of proofs or attestations and of prodigies or portents. *Show* literally, *give*, which has been taken in three different senses; that of offering or promising, without performing; that of giving out, professing, or pretending; and that of really affording or exhibiting. The last, as being the strict sense of the expression, is entitled to the preference without some positive reason for departing from it. Now the only reason that can be suggested is the supposed improbability of the thing predicted, and the absence of historical proof that the prediction was fulfilled in this sense. But we do read on the one hand of extravagant pretensions, and on the other of extraordinary portents, just before or at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem; and how far these things were connected, may be reasonably made a question. This prediction, in its strict sense, is among the passages which seem to show that even real miracles are not sufficient of themselves to prove the truth of any doctrine, but only one part of a complex demonstration, at once sensible, rational, and spiritual. The last clause expresses both the tendency and purpose of these lying wonders, *to seduce, to the seducing or deceiving away from* (the truth and from the church), *if possible* (implying that it is not), *even* (or also, no less than others) *the elect*, those chosen to salvation, both in the proximate and lower sense of present deliverance from such deception, and in the higher one of ultimate deliverance from sin and suffering (see above, on v. 20.)

23. But take ye heed; behold, I have foretold you all (things.)

He now exhorts them to do their part by becoming caution, as he had done his by timely admonition. *But* (on the other hand) *do ye* (emphatic because not necessarily expressed in Greek as it is in English) *look (out)*, *see (to it)*, be on your guard; for if you fail to do so

it will not be my fault. *Behold*, a word entirely different from that immediately preceding, and in this connection nearly equivalent to our phrase, you see, you know. *I have foretold*, or told you beforehand, an expression not confined to prophecy or supernatural prediction, but occasionally used to express mere priority of time or order, a distinction here of no importance where the two things coincide, as he had not only spoken but predicted it beforehand. This appeal to the apostles as in danger of delusion, and responsible for the use of the prescribed means of escape from it, implies that the reference is still to those times, without any indication of a wider or ulterior purpose.

24. But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.

The language of this verse is entirely perspicuous; but as to its application and connection, there are two questions of no small difficulty and importance. The first is, what we are to understand by *those days*, and as a subordinate point, *that tribulation*? The other is, in what sense the great physical changes mentioned in the last clause are to be explained, as figures for political and social revolutions, or as literal mutations in the face of nature. These questions are by no means independent of each other, the solution of the second being really involved in the solution of the first. In a case so doubtful and uncertain, where the speculations and disputes of ages have succeeded only in presenting new alternatives, without providing new means of decisive choice between them, it will be sufficient to record the two most plausible and popular hypotheses, to which indeed all others may be readily reduced. The first assumes that this is a direct continuation of the previous prediction, so that *those days* are the days of the destruction of Jerusalem, and *that distress* the unexampled suffering by which it was preceded and accompanied. From this assumption, by a necessary consequence, it follows that the changes mentioned in this verse and the next are figures for national and social revolution; that the coming of the Son of Man (predicted in v. 26) is the same invisible coming which took place at the destruction of Jerusalem (see above, on v. 21); and lastly, that the angels of v. 27 are the preachers of the gospel, and the gathering there ascribed to them the planting and extension of the church among the Gentiles. It is vain to say, in opposition to this view, that it converts into figures what may just as well be literally understood; because so long as it remains true that some prophecies are not to be strictly interpreted (for instance that of Malachi respecting Elijah, as explained by Christ himself in 9, 12. 13), it will still be possible to put a similar construction upon others, and will still be made a question whether this is right or wrong in any given case, until decided by the actual event, like the prophecies respecting our Lord's advent and the circumstances of his passion (see above, p. 342.) The adherents of the figurative explanation can appeal to a long series of Old Testament predictions, where it seems just as natural and clear to them as it seems irrational and false to their opponents.

The question therefore cannot be decided, either upon abstract principles of hermeneutics, or from the general analogy of scripture, since the principles are really the subject of dispute, and the analogies adduced are just as doubtful as the case before us. The only way in which the ultimate solution of the question can be hastened or facilitated, is by appealing to the context and inquiring whether the construction which has now been stated is the simplest and most natural. In favour of it is the consecution of the passage and the intimate connection with the previous context, without any explicit indication of a change of subject. On the other hand it may be urged that such transitions are not always formally announced, but often slightly though intelligibly hinted, and that even those who deny the change of subject here, are obliged to admit it at some later point of the prediction, where it is no more self-evident or certain than at this. But is there any indication, even a slight one, that our Lord here passes to a more remote futurity? Such an indication some discover in the conjunction *but* and pronoun *those*, which although it may possibly mean *those same*, or the days just mentioned, may also mean, and it is said with closer adherence to its primary usage, as denoting a remoter object, *those other*, or the days spoken of before but not in the immediate context, or even though not previously spoken of at all in this discourse, yet readily suggested and intelligible from its whole design and purport. According to this view of the passage, after having warned the twelve of the physical and moral risks to which they must expect to be exposed in the approaching crisis of the Jewish church and state, he says, *but in those (other) days, after that tribulation* (without saying how long after), there shall be a change, not only in the church and state, but in the frame of nature, and then shall the Son of Man appear again, not as in the other case invisibly, but visibly and in his proper person, in the clouds and with his angels, who shall gather together the elect from every quarter. This exegetical hypothesis has certainly the great advantage of applying the strong language of the passage to a change which all believe to be predicted elsewhere, although some deny that it is foretold here. As to the question of connection and the sense to be attached to *those days*, it is so minute and subtle, as a question both of logic and philology, that even the most candid and judicious may arrive at very different conclusions. These remarks have reference to the report of Mark alone; the additional difficulties which arise from the word *immediately* used by Matthew (24, 29), and the mode of reconciling that expression with the last view here presented, can be most conveniently considered and disposed of in the exposition of that gospel.

25. And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.

*Shall fall*, or more exactly, *shall be falling*, which unusual expression may denote a continued rather than a sudden fall, whether literal or tropical. From its not being said *upon the earth* (as in Rev. 9. 1), some infer that the stars are here described as *falling out* (the strict

sense of the Greek word), i. e. going out, expiring (compare Rom. 9, 6. 1 Cor. 13, 8. Jas. 1, 11. 1 Pet. 1, 24), or apparently falling out of heaven, like what are vulgarly called shooting stars. *The powers (those) in heaven*, are by some understood to mean the heavenly host (or forces), an expression applied elsewhere both to the heavenly bodies and to angels. Others, with less probability, attach to it the abstract sense of physical forces, or the powers of nature, those mysterious influences by which the celestial motions and phenomena are caused and regulated. The essential idea, upon either of these suppositions, still remains the same, namely, that of total change in the appearance of the heavens. *Shaken*, a Greek verb originally denoting the commotion of the sea, but applied in usage to all violent agitation, whether physical or moral (compare Matt. 11, 7. Luke 6, 38. 48, with Acts 17, 13. 27, 4. 2, 2.)

26. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

*And then*, i. e. according to the first interpretation above given (on v. 24), at the same time, that of the destruction of Jerusalem; according to the other, then and not before, at the time of the final consummation just predicted. *The Son of Man*, the Messiah, now in his state of humiliation, but then exalted to the right hand of power. *In clouds* (without the article), not in the ordinary clouds of heaven, but surrounded by such vapour yet luminous integuments as anciently disclosed and at the same time veiled the glory of Jehovah's presence (see above, on 9, 7, and compare Ex. 14, 20. 16, 10. 19, 9. Num. 10, 37. Ps. 97, 2. Dan. 7, 13.) *With power much and glory*, i. e. not only in the actual possession of divine power and authority, but also with a visible display of it, according to the scriptural usage of the Greek and Hebrew terms translated *glory* (Ps. 68, 17. Acts 7, 53. Heb. 12, 22.)

27. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

The presence of the angels, implied in the preceding verse, as in every mention of a theophany or divine manifestation (see above, on 8, 38, and compare Luke 9, 24. 9, 52), is here distinctly mentioned in connection with their office as ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation (Heb. 1, 14), and especially as sent forth to assemble them on this occasion. Those who understand this as referring to the fall of Jerusalem and its effects, either take angels in its primary and wide sense of messengers, or in the usual sense as figures for the preachers of the gospel, or as themselves invisibly but really employed in its diffusion. *Gather together* is in Greek still stronger, as the double compound verb suggests the additional idea of a common centre, or rallying point, rendezvous. *The four winds*, the cardinal points from which the winds blow, used in prophecy for the boundaries of the whole earth and for

all between them (Ezek. 37, 9. Dan. 7, 2. 11, 4.) *From earth's end to heaven's end*, without the article prefixed to either of the nouns, i. e. from end to end of the world or visible creation, of which heaven and earth are the two great divisions. Some, with less probability, suppose an allusion to the apparent junction of the earth and sky at the horizon or the boundary of vision. But in either case, the main idea is the same, that of assemblage from the whole world in its widest extension and remotest bounds.

28. Now learn a parable of the fig-tree. When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near.

*Now* is not an adverb of time (*νῦν*), but the usual connective (*δέ*) meaning simply *and* or *but*, but not with the strong adversative force of the conjunction (*ἀλλά*) at the beginning of v. 24. *From the fig-tree* (i. e. as proceeding from it or afforded by it) *learn the parable* (i. e. the analogy appropriate to this case and throwing light upon it.) *Her branch*, a literal translation of the Greek, in which the word for *fig-tree* is feminine. The possessive *its* appears to have been unknown at the date of our translation, and the old form *thereof* is avoided here as awkward and cacophonous. *Has already become soft* (or *tender*) with the flowing sap, and thus prepared for germination. *Is yet*, referring to a previous condition as still lasting, conveys the very opposite idea to the one intended, which is that of change at the return of spring. *Puts forth*, lets grow, or, if taken as a passive form, *are put forth*, which however is less natural and less accordant with the half-personification of the fig-tree in the words preceding. *Ye know that near the summer is*, one of our Lord's numerous appeals, not only to the processes of nature, but to the business and experience of common life, to illustrate moral truth. This is the third recorded use of the fig-tree for that purpose (see above, on 11, 13, and compare Luke 13, 5.)

29. So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, (even) at the doors.

*So also ye*, an emphatic form, still stronger than the one at the beginning of v. 23, and serving to distinguish his immediate hearers from the subject of the verb *know* in v. 28, although the parties are identical. The antithesis really intended is between their habits of external observation as to natural changes and the duty of analogous attention to far more important moral changes. (Compare Luke 12, 54-56.) *Come to pass*, or rather coming to pass, happening. They must not wait until the signs were past before they drew their conclusion and addressed themselves to action. *Know*, precisely the same form in Greek with that in the preceding verse, and there translated *ye know*; but this fortuitous coincidence between the second person plural of the present indicative and imperative, is one of the few ambiguities belonging to the

Greek verb, and occasionally making the construction doubtful (as in John 14, 1), although here the sense is clear from the connection, even in the common text ; but the oldest manuscripts and latest critics have the passive form (*γνώσκεται*) *it is known*. (*It*) *is nigh*, may either mean the moral or figurative summer, corresponding to the natural or proper one in the preceding verse ; or more directly, the catastrophe or consummation which the figure represented. *At (the) doors*, a familiar and expressive figure for proximity or nearness, which is rather weakened than enforced by adding *even*.

30. Verily, I say unto you, That this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

*Verily (Amen), I* (the Son of Man) *say to you* (my disciples and apostles), a preliminary formula indicative, as usual, of something to be uttered peculiarly solemn and important. It is indeed the turning point of the whole question as to the period referred to in the previous context, and might be described (by another figure) as the key to it, but for its own obscurity and various interpretation. *Shall not pass*, the usual aorist subjunctive, suggesting rather the idea that it may or cannot pass, the negative future being necessarily implied though not expressed. *Be done*, come to pass, or happen, the same verb that is used in the preceding verse. *Pass*, pass by, or pass away, a verb applied elsewhere to the lapse of time (as in 14, 35 below, and in Matt. 14, 15. Acts 27, 9. 1 Pet. 4, 3), to the motions of men (as in 6, 48 above, and in Matt. 8, 28. Luke 12, 37. 17, 7. 18, 37. Acts 16, 8. 24, 7), and to the disappearance or removal of inanimate objects (as in the next verse, and in Matt. 26, 39. 42. Luke 16, 17. 2 Cor. 5, 17. 2 Pet. 3, 10. Rev. 21, 1.) But the critical word in this critical sentence is *generation*, which some make here synonymous with *race* or *nation*, and apply it to the Jews, who are not to lose their separate existence until all these changes have been realized. This gives a wide scope to the prophecy, and readily enables us to transport what is said in vs. 24-27 to an indefinitely distant future. But although some English writers, for this reason, still adhere to that interpretation, others of the same class, and the German philologists almost without exception, treat it as a sheer invention without any authority either in classical or Hellenistic usage, so that some of the best lexicons do not give this definition, even to condemn it. Of the few alleged examples, chiefly in the Septuagint version, all admit of being taken in one of the acknowledged senses, which in the New Testament are three in number, all reducible to one and the same radical idea, that of a contemporary race, or the aggregate of those living at the same time. This is the direct sense in the great majority of cases (such as 8, 12. 38. 9, 19. Matt. 11, 16. 12, 39-45. 16, 4. 23, 36. Luke 7, 31. 16, 8. 17, 25. Acts 2, 40. 13, 36. Phil. 2, 15. Heb. 3, 10), and is scarcely modified when transferred from men to time (as in Acts 14, 16. 15, 21. Eph. 3, 5. 21. Col. 1, 26), or to the stages of descent and degrees of genealogical succession (as in Matt. 1, 17.) Common to all these cases is the radical idea of *contemporaneous*

*existence*, which it would be monstrous therefore to exclude in that before us, as we must do, if we understand it of the whole race in its successive generations. It follows, therefore, that unless we forge a meaning for the word in this place, which is not only unexampled elsewhere, but directly contradictory to its essential meaning everywhere, we must understand our Lord as saying, that the contemporary race or generation, i. e. those then living, should not pass away or die till all these prophecies had been accomplished. The precise time designated is of no importance; whether a generation be reckoned at its maximum (a hundred years), or at its minimum (thirty), the result in this case will be still the same; for although the great mass of the generation might be gone within the shortest of these periods, some would still survive to represent it, as we know that one of the men here addressed did actually live nearly, if not quite, seventy years longer. The choice here does not lie between a larger or a smaller fraction of a century, but between years and ages. Those who apply the whole preceding context to Christ's coming at the downfall of Jerusalem, consider that interpretation as required by the verse before us; but this exegetical necessity is not acknowledged on the part of those who give a wider scope to the prediction. Of these some assume another change of subject, or transition from a remoter to a proximate futurity, and limit *all these things* to what immediately precedes. Others explain *done* or *come to pass* as meaning *shall begin to be fulfilled*, so far as to ensure the rest of the fulfilment which has been proceeding ever since. A third solution proceeds upon the general assumption that this prophecy, like prophecy in general, is not intended to predict events which were to happen once for all at some specific juncture, but a series or sequence of events which should often be repeated, sometimes on a large and sometimes on a small scale, now in this place, now in that, here in one form, there in another, but throughout the variations with a constant adherence to the original essential consecution of causes and effects, and even to the primary form of the prediction, so far as to make each fulfilment recognisable as such whenever seen upon the field of history or actual experience. This last hypothesis, which might be justly questioned as a mere imagination if applied to this case only, is in fact derived from an extensive induction of the older prophecies, and only secondarily made use of in the one before us. By one or another of these plausible hypotheses, the words of Christ in this verse may be taken in their strict sense, without necessarily restricting what precedes to a proximate futurity, i. e. to the period of the Roman conquest and destruction of Jerusalem, but applying at least some parts (for example vs. 24-27) to his second advent and the final consummation. The meaning of the verse before us then will be, that the contemporary generation should not wholly pass away without beholding one great cycle of fulfilment, i. e. without seeing this prophetic picture realized, as to all its essential parts, in one specific instance, although not exhausted of its whole prophetic import, which is yet to be developed in a course of ages.

31. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

To the strong asseveration in the first clause of the preceding verse, which by itself has the force of the most solemn oath, our Lord now adds another most emphatic declaration of the infallible fulfilment of his prophecy, applying, not as in the other case, to that one sentence, but to the whole discourse or series of predictions. The meaning is not merely that his word can no more pass away than heaven and earth, implying that the latter is impossible; for although the established frame of nature, or existing constitution of the universe, is sometimes used in the Old Testament as the strongest expression of unchangeable stability (e. g. in Ps. 72, 7. 17. 89, 37. Jer. 33, 25), that meaning is not only less accordant with New Testament usage, but is here forbidden by the structure of the sentence, the first clause of which is not contingent or conditional, but a direct and positive assurance that the heaven and the earth, with the article, i. e. this heaven and this earth, which you regard as so immutable, shall (i. e. certainly will) pass away or disappear, cease to exist, at least in their present form. *But my words*, what I say in general, and what I have said on this occasion in particular, not only shall or will not pass away, as a matter of ordained and settled certainty, but could not in any case or possible contingency, a difference suggested by the change of the indicative future to the aorist subjunctive. *Pass away*, as applied to words, means, cease to be true or prove false, or in any way whatever fail of their accomplishment.

32. But of that day and (that) hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

*But of that day*, the same emphatic pronoun that occurs above in v. 24, and which here as there may possibly mean *that (same) day*, of which I have just spoken (in v. 30), but more probably, because more agreeably to usage, *that (other) day*, of which I spoke before (in vs. 24-27.) *And that hour*, or according to the critics, *or the hour*, which is merely added to convey still more precisely the idea of exact time. *No one knows except the Father* is the main proposition, the intervening words being merely a parenthesis, designed to strengthen the negation by excluding what might else have been considered probable exceptions. *No one—not even the angels*, or as the oldest copy reads, *an angel in heaven*, i. e. one nearest to God and therefore most likely to know, *not even the Son—except the Father*. This view of the syntax shows the absurdity of reading *no man*, unless it be in some pronominal and vague sense which the word has lost in modern English (see above, on 2, 21. 10, 18.) It also seems to show the impossibility of the construction, *nor the Son except* (as he is one with) *the Father*, which, though true in logic and theology, is false in grammar. The difficulty which it was intended to remove, is obvious and very great, and none

the less because peculiar to this gospel, where the words stand however in all ancient manuscripts and versions, though in some with an addition (such as *only* or *of man*) intended to relieve the seeming contradiction between that negation and the omniscience of the Saviour. So deeply was this difficulty felt in ancient times, that Ambrose pronounced the clause an Arian interpolation, as if the Arians could have had the opportunity of making it in all known copies, or having it would only have embraced it in this one case and in this one gospel! Such subterfuges are no longer thought of, and the words are now universally regarded as among the least suspicious in the text of the New Testament. Another ancient method of escape, not critical but exegetical, is that suggested by Augustin, who by Christ's not knowing understands that he did not choose to tell, as this was a matter not intended to be known by the disciples. Not only far more candid, but immeasurably more profound and satisfactory, is Calvin's recognition of the words in their most obvious and strongest sense, as the statement of a truth beyond our comprehension, yet not more so than the whole mystery of godliness, or doctrine of the incarnation, which involves the coexistence of the finite and the infinite, of limitation and immensity, in one theanthropic person. Whether this be represented as a suspension or repose of the divinity in union with humanity, or called by any other specious name, is a mere question of philosophical nomenclature, the decision of which any way must still leave the difficulty where it found it. As the proof of Christ's divinity depends on no one passage nor indeed on any number of specific proof-texts, but is interwoven with the warp and woof of scriptural theology, it cannot be unravelled, or in any way impaired, by the fullest admission that, in some sense, the ignorance of men and angels, with respect to the precise time of the final consummation, was shared by the Son himself. That such a declaration should be made at all, is wonderful enough, but scarcely credible on any supposition, or in any sense, if made in reference to the date of the destruction of Jerusalem.

33. Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is.

But what should be the practical effect of this uncertainty? Not recklessness, but watchfulness. *Take heed*, look (out), see (to it), be upon your guard, the same expression as in v. 23. *Watch*, in both languages originally means to be awake, not to sleep, but with the accessory notion, which has now become the principal, of being on one's guard or looking out for danger. *Pray*, implying, as in v. 18, that neither watchfulness nor caution is sufficient to avert the danger here in question without a special divine interposition, and that this can only be obtained by asking. So far from the use of these means being superseded by their ignorance of the time fixed for the events, this ignorance is given as the very reason why they ought to use them. *Watch and pray, because ye know not when the time is.*

34. (For the Son of Man is) as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

This is not a formal parable, as the words supplied in the Geneva Bible and retained in our translation seem to indicate, but merely a comparison occurring as it were at the moment, and immediately suggested to the reader, by an *as* or *as if*, ‘Ye know not when the time is, as if (or any more than if) a man &c.’ *Taking a far journey*, is a single word in Greek, and that an adjective derived from (or akin to) the verb used above in 12, 1, and there explained. The former strictly means *away from home*, or rather *from one’s people*, and denotes therefore not mere absence from one’s house or family but from his country. Beyond this, neither distance nor the act of journeying is necessarily suggested by the Greek word which, as here combined with *man*, approaches very nearly to the English *absentee*, especially as used in Ireland, to denote proprietors who do not live upon their lands nor even in the country, but beyond the channel or in foreign parts. *Who left* is too historical a form, leading the reader to expect a formal narrative, instead of a mere passing reference. The Greek word is a participle, *leaving (or having left) his house, giving (or having given) to his servants*, i. c. at the time of his departure, *the authority (or delegated power)* to conduct his household and to manage his affairs while absent. *And to each his own work*, so that the authority with which they were collectively entrusted was not to exempt them individually from the necessity of work or labour. *And to the porter or doorkeeper he entrusted a peculiar charge, that he should watch*, both keep awake and guard the house, as well as be in readiness to readmit his master should he unexpectedly return; for this idea, although not expressed, is necessarily suggested by the previous context, and implied in our Saviour’s application of the case supposed to that of his disciples in the next verse. The verb translated *watch* is not the one so rendered in the verse preceding and familiarly employed in Attic prose by Xenophon and Plato, but a later Greek or Hellenistic synonyme, derived from a secondary sense of another Attic verb. The only difference, if any, in their primary signification, is that the one here used means strictly to awake, and the other to be sleepless or to lie awake. As here used they are perfectly synonymous.

35. Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning.

*Watch ye therefore*, do as that servant was required by his master, and for the same reason, that the master may himself return when not expected. This transition from the parable or illustration to the case in hand is very beautiful though very simple, and is rendered still more

striking by our Lord's addressing his disciples just as if they were domestics left in charge of their master's property and dwelling. He does not say, 'for you are like those servants in not knowing,' but without employing any term of likeness or comparison, he says to them directly, *for ye know not when the master of the house cometh*, thus transporting them at once into the ideal situation which he had been just describing. There is something in the turn thus given to the conversation as pleasing to the taste as it is helpful to the understanding. The last clause is, if possible, more exquisite and admirable still; for with inimitable ease and grace, it carries out the imaginary case in its details, without a formal application, which could not be needed even by the dullest or most careless reader. The divisions of the night here mentioned are commonly supposed to be the four military watches which had superseded the three ancient ones at the Roman conquest. See above, on 6, 48, where this division is implied; but here the watches are distinctly enumerated, no doubt by their proper and customary names. *At even*, a Greek adverb, strictly meaning *late*, a relative expression sometimes meaning late in life, but commonly late in the day, or towards its close, at evening, and in reference to night, the early portion as distinguished from the three that follow. *Midnight* explains itself, and has its synomyms in every language. *Cock-crow*, a compound used in AEsop's fables, and in this enumeration designating the three hours after midnight. *In the morning*, literally, *early*, the exact correlative of *late*, the first of the four terms here used, and technically signifying the three hours before sunrise. After all, it may be doubted whether this division is not rather popular than technical, rural than military, and whether this view of the language does not enhance its poetical or graphic beauty. It is needless to observe how much is added to the point and force of the whole sentence, by distinctly naming the divisions of the night, instead of saying as he might have done, without a difference of essential meaning, 'at whatever time of night he may arrive.'

### 36. Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

This is the conclusion of the charge in the first clause of the preceding verse, the residue of that verse forming a parenthesis, in which the reason is assigned for watching, namely, that they knew not when their master would return. That reason is in fact, though not in form, here carried out by showing why their ignorance should make them watchful. *Lest* (for fear that) *coming suddenly* (without immediate warning or affording time for preparation) *he find you sleeping*, and thereby neglecting his express command as well as treating him with insolent indifference. The assumption here that they were bound to watch or sit up for their master, which is not the ordinary duty of all servants, seems to show that he considers his apostles as doorkeepers or porters, whose charge it was to watch in this way, and of whom he made specific mention in the close of v. 34. As if he had said, 'you will soon be like servants left at home by their master, and especially like porters

left to guard the door and watch for his return.' The fitness and propriety of this particular comparison, besides the general one to servants, is another delicate but admirable stroke in this inimitable picture.

### 37. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.

Had our Lord's discourse ended with the preceding verse, it would have been a charge to the apostles, as such, or at most to rulers in the church, so far as they resemble or succeed them in official functions. But with gracious wisdom, and at the same time with a heavenly art transcending all rhetorical contrivances, he at the very close, and in a sentence of unusual brevity, at once extends the exhortation to incessant watchfulness, as founded on the utter uncertainty of those great changes, and especially the greatest of all which he had predicted, to his followers in general, not only to those then alive, in view of the destruction just impending over Israel, but also, by parity of reasoning and necessary consequence, to all believers who should live before the final consummation. *What (things) to you I say to all I say,* then summing all up in one single word, the burden and the moral of this whole discourse, *Awake (or watch!)* However the disciples may have been affected and impressed by this concluding apostrophe and warning, it is not to be supposed that they could either understand or feel it at the time of its delivery, as they did not long after, when they found themselves indeed forsaken by their master, and entrusted with the care of his house and household till he came again.



## CHAPTER XIV.

HAVING wound up the history of our Lord's prophetic ministry, the evangelist now enters upon that of his sacerdotal work, beginning with the final resolution of the theocratic rulers to destroy him (1-2), but then pausing to record a touching incident which took place during his abode at Bethany, his unction by a woman, as a sort of preparation for his burial (3-9), and at the same time bringing to maturity the treacherous design which had already been conceived by one of his apostles (10-11.) Then follows an account of the arrangements made for his last passover (12-16) and of its actual celebration, during which he announces his betrayal by one of their own number (17-21), and after which he institutes the Christian Passover or Lord's Supper (22-25.) At the close of this remarkable service, he withdraws from the city to the mount of Olives, by the way announcing to the twelve that they were about to be dissolved and scattered until he should reassemble them in Galilee after his resurrection (26-28), with a particular prediction to Peter of his own approaching fall (29-31.) Then comes the prelude to his final passion, the mysterious conflict in the

garden of Gethsemane (32-42), immediately followed by his seizure and the flight of his disciples, the particulars of which appalling scene are stated briefly but with graphic vividness (43-52.) The next scene exhibits his arraignment in the presence of the High Priest and the Sanhedrim, the false charge and testimony brought against him, his refusal to defend himself or answer any of their allegations, till at length he has an opportunity, not only of declaring but of solemnly swearing, that he is the true Messiah, whereupon he is condemned to death for blasphemy, and in the meantime given up as a convict to derision and maltreatment (53-65.) During these proceedings his prediction with respect to Peter's fall had been literally verified by three distinct denials of his master, under circumstances of peculiar aggravation, a humiliating but exact account of which concludes the chapter (66-72.) Although the division of the chapters here is disproportionate and inconvenient, it could hardly have been made otherwise without a still more undesirable disruption of the narrative, in which no pause occurs between the incident at Bethany and the transfer of our Saviour from the bar of Caiaphas to that of Pilate. In examining the details of this most interesting and important passage, it will be even more than usually proper and expedient to make use of the parallel accounts only for the purpose of defence or illustration, leaving Mark to tell his story in his own way, both as to the choice and the arrangement of his facts and his peculiar method of expression, all which are essential to the oneness and the definite effect of the whole narrative.

1. After two days was (the feast of) the passover, and of unleavened bread ; and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft and put (him) to death.

*After two days* does not mean that the passover was two days after the discourse in the preceding chapter, though it may have been so, but that two days before the passover Jesus took the preparatory steps here mentioned. The word translated *passover* (*pascha*) is the Aramaic form (אַפְּשָׁה) of the original Hebrew term (פֶּשֶׁת), applied in the law of Moses to the annual solemnity observed in commemoration of the exodus from Egypt, and so called because the destroying angel passed by or over (פָּשָׁת) the houses of the Israelites in the destruction of the first-born. It was first celebrated in the very night of the departure out of Egypt, and thenceforth annually (with a few interruptions) until the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. It was the oldest and in some respects the most important of the observances introduced by Moses, and is therefore often called *the feast* (or *festival*) by way of eminence. It was at once sacrificial and domestic, the essential rite consisting in the slaughter of a lamb at the sanctuary and its subsequent consumption, not by fire on the altar, but as food by the household of the offerer. The original institution of this service is recorded in Ex. 12, 1-16, and afterwards embodied in the Mosaic

legislation (Lev. 23, 5. Num. 9, 1-3.) To make the rite more truly commemorative, it was anciently observed precisely as at first, in a standing posture and with every preparation for an immediate journey. This exact imitation of the outward circumstance seems to have been gradually discontinued, with the exception of the bitter herbs and the unleavened bread, although the essence of the rite remained unaltered. Besides its primary commemorative purpose, it was connected, in the ceremonial calendar, with the commencement of the harvest, and as a prophetic symbol typified the great deliverer who was to come, "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1, 29. 1 Cor. 5, 7.) From it the Jewish year was reckoned (Ex. 12, 2), and by it the chronology of Christ's public ministry is marked and measured in the gospel of John (2, 13. 23. 4, 45. 5, 1. 6, 4. 11, 55.) The paschal lamb was selected on the tenth day of the first month (Nisan), and slaughtered on the fourteenth in the evening, or as the Hebrew phrase (Ex. 12, 6) literally means, *between the evenings*, i. e. according to the Karaites and Samaritans, between sunset and dark; but according to the prevalent practice and tradition, the first evening began with the declining and the second with the setting sun. A similar distinction between an earlier and later evening is mentioned by Herodotus, and may be still traced in the diverse use of the word *evening*, as denoting the afternoon or the beginning of the night, in different parts of our own country. The later traditions of the Jews, collected in the Talmud and the writings of Maimonides and other rabbins, describe a very complicated paschal ritual, including the distribution of five successive cups of wine, the singing of a series of psalms which they called the Great Hallel, and various liturgical formulas of benediction and thanksgiving. Whether the service was conducted in this form at the time of Christ is altogether doubtful; but even granting that it was, it cannot be supposed that our Lord would put the traditional additions on the same footing with the paschal rite itself. Besides the passover, properly so called, on the fourteenth day of the first month, there was a festival of seven days, extending to the evening of the twenty-first, during which unleavened bread was eaten, as it was at the paschal meal itself, in commemoration of the haste with which Israel went out of Egypt with their dough yet unleavened in their kneading-troughs, but at the same time with a typical allusion to the fermentation of yeast or leaven as an incipient corruption and as such an emblem of moral depravation, for which symbolical reason leaven was excluded from all offerings by the law of Moses, just as salt was required in all animal oblations on account of its conservative and antiseptic virtue (see above, on 9, 49.) The whole of this festival is here meant by *the passover and the unleavened (bread, or strictly, things, the adjective in Greek being of the plural number and the neuter gender.)* Coincident with this great annual observance was the final resolution of the ecclesiastical and national authorities (here as often elsewhere represented by *the chief priests and scribes*) to destroy the life of Jesus, not by open violence, but as they still hoped, by *deceit or craft*, a significant Greek word which originally means a

bait for fish, but in its secondary usage any means of enticing even human prey. The immediate object of the fraud or trick was to secure his person, but their ultimate design to kill him. *Sought how* (as in 11, 18), considered and inquired by what means their end might be attained, an expression which perhaps implies that they had not yet satisfied themselves on this point, or projected any definite design.

2. But they said, Not on the feast (day), lest there be an uproar of the people.

*They said*, not once for all, or on any one occasion, but as the imperfect tense implies, from time to time, during their consultations on the subject. *On the feast day* should be *in the feast* (or *festival*), as the concourse which gave rise to their fears was not confined to the day of the passover strictly so called, but continued through the whole week following or the *days of unleavened bread*. *Lest*, or lest at some time during the term specified, the Greek word being not the simple negative (*μή*), but a form compounded with an indefinite particle of time (*μήποτε*.) *There be*, literally, *shall be*, a form of speech implying more distinctly than the subjunctive, the probability of such an issue. *Uproar*, a good translation of the Greek word which properly means noise or audible disturbance (see above, on 5, 38), and is only secondarily applied to tumult or popular disorder in general. *Of the people*, as a mass or aggregate (*λαοῦ*) but not an organized body (*δῆμον*.) Here, as elsewhere, the people present at Jerusalem are spoken of as representing the whole race of Israel, which is the less surprising as the population at this season was not only swelled to an enormous size, but composed of Jews and proselytes of "every nation under heaven" (Acts 2, 5.) Thus far the plans of the rulers for our Lord's destruction seem to have been merely negative, and so continued till a new turn was given to their whole proceedings by the overtures of Judas (see below, on v. 10.)

3. And being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster-box of ointment of spikenard, very precious; and she brake the box, and poured (it) on his head.

Before proceeding to describe this change of plan, and the negotiation which occasioned it, Mark pauses to relate an incident connected with it in more ways than one, as well as very striking and affecting in itself. *Being in Bethany*, i. e. while he was at Bethany during his last visit to Jerusalem. (See above, on 11, 11.) Nothing can be more natural and easy than the introduction of this incident at this point, both by Mark and Matthew (26, 6), the attempt to represent it as at variance with the chronology of John (12, 1) being altogether groundless, as the *six days* there relate to his arrival in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and the *two days* here to his preparation for the paschal service. Equally groundless is the notion, entertained by some, that the

passages describe two different anointings, a coincidence not only most improbable, but here assumed without the least necessity. *Simon the leper*, i. e. who had formerly been so afflicted, not at this time, which would have excluded him from society (see above, on 1, 40), unless we assume that he was absent upon this occasion. The definite description of him as *the leper* implies that he was generally well known, perhaps as one whom Christ had healed. That he was a relative or intimate friend of Lazarus, though not at all improbable, is not a necessary supposition to conciliate this narrative with John's, who mentions Lazarus as present at the entertainment and Martha as attending on the guests, neither of which statements necessarily implies that it was in their own house. *A woman*, i. e. Mary the sister of Lazarus and Martha (John 12, 3), the same difference between the sisters being here observable as in the incident preserved by Luke (10, 38-41.) *Alabaster* (*box* is not expressed in the original), a term properly denoting a variety of gypsum, white and semi-transparent, and susceptible of being wrought into delicate and ornamental shapes, such as vases and vials, particularly spoken of by Pliny as the best receptacles for unguents, or the fragrant oils regarded by the ancients as among the most costly and delightful luxuries. From the frequent use of alabaster for this purpose it acquired the wider sense of any such receptacle, so that Theocritus speaks of "golden alabasters." There is no need however of departing from the strict sense in the case before us, as the whole impression made by the description is that of a refined and exquisite as well as rare and costly sacrifice. *Of* (that is, *full of*, or containing) *spikenard*, which appears to be intended as a version of two distinct Greek words, the first a noun (*nard*) denoting an oriental gum or exudation, highly valued by the ancients, and the other an adjective (*πιστικῆς*) which has been variously understood, as denoting the place from which the unguent was procured (*Pista*), but of which we have no other information; or as derived from the verb (*πίνω*) to drink, and meaning liquid, potable, an explanation coinciding remarkably with a statement in Athenaeus as to drinkable unguents, among which *nard* is particularly mentioned. But most interpreters, ancient and modern, adhere to the only sense of the Greek word justified by usage, which connects it with the well known words for *faith* (*πίστις*) and *faithful* (*πιστός*), and makes it here mean *true* or *genuine*, as opposed to counterfeits and adulterations. *Very precious*, i. e. in the old and strict sense of the English word, of great price, costly, dear, expensive. *And breaking*, literally, breaking together, i. e. crushing by compression, which was probably a part of the luxurious custom, and perhaps one reason for the use of alabaster, as a compact but compressible material. *The box*, in Greek, *the alabaster*, as before, *box* being not only not in the original, but probably conveying an erroneous notion of the shape, which is much more likely to have been that of a close-mouthed vase or long-necked phial. *Poured (it) down upon him, down upon the head*, the last words being added as a specification of the first, and the downward motion twice expressed (though not at all in the translation) by the repetition of a preposition (*κατά*) having that sense in connection

both with verbs and nouns. (For examples of this usage, see 1, 10. 30. 4, 4. 5, 13. 10, 42. 11, 15. 12, 40. 13, 2.) The remarkable emphasis thus put upon the downward motion, though a matter of course, apparently requiring no particular mention, may be intended to suggest that the fragrant affusion ran down upon the person of the Saviour even to his feet, thus reconciling one of the alleged discrepancies between John's narrative and that before us.

4. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made ?

We have here a fine example of the way in which independent but concurrent witnesses complete each other's statements, a phenomenon familiar to the plainest men among ourselves who ever sat upon a jury, or even attended a trial, though pronounced by German wisdom an irreconcileable discrepancy. *There were some*, says Mark ; *the disciples*, says Matthew (26, 8) ; *one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot*, says John (12, 4) ; all perfectly consistent and completely harmonized by simply supposing, that what Judas suggested was inconsiderately caught up and repeated by the rest, a fact of every-day occurrence in our popular assemblies. *Had indignation*, grieving and complaining, a verb expressive both of sorrow and resentment or disapprobation (see above, on 10, 14. 41.) *Within* (or more exactly *to*) *themselves*, perhaps with the accessory idea, *to each other* (see above, on 2, 8. 9, 33. 10, 26. 11, 31. 12, 7.) And saying, *to what (end), or for what (reason), has this loss (waste or destruction) of the ointment happened* (come to pass or taken place), a milder or more indirect reproach than that expressed in our version.

5. For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

The ground of the objection is distinctly stated, not that the use of such things was luxurious and therefore sinful, but that the money which it cost might have been better spent in the relief of suffering. In itself considered, this is a most plausible objection, and was no doubt honestly expressed by some or all of the disciples, except Judas who first broached it, and whose avarice repined that she had not contributed the same amount in money, so as to be under his control and probably at his disposal (John 12, 6.) *Might (or could) have been sold*, a Greek verb originally meaning export trade or traffic beyond seas, but then generically used of any sale whatever. *More than*, literally *above* or *over*, a coincidence between the Greek and English idiom. *Pence*, denarii, the Roman silver coin before referred to (in 6, 37. 12, 15) and there explained. The sum here mentioned is from forty-five to fifty dollars of our money, and agrees almost exactly with the price of the most

costly nard as stated by Pliny. *Murmured*, or expressed their dissatisfaction, not only *at* but *to her*.

6. And Jesus said, Let her alone ; why trouble ye her ? she hath wrought a good work on me.

*Let her alone*, leave her, suffer her to do what she is doing (compare the use of the same verb in 7, 27. 10, 14. 11, 6.) *Trouble*, literally, *give* (or *afford*) *labours*, cares, vexations, an idiom also found in Attic prose. *A good work*, not merely no offence or folly, but a positively good work, *she has wrought*, the genuine past tense of the English verb to *work* (now nearly superseded by the so-called regular form *worked*) and therefore exactly corresponding to the noun, as in the original. *On me*, literally, *in me*, a preposition of more various and frequent use in Greek than English, here suggesting the idea of a closer contact and more intimate effect or operation than the other particle. This is a memorable and instructive instance of our Lord's rejecting an ostensible morality as spurious or ill-timed, and approving what would still be condemned by many sincere Christians as a sinful or at least an irrational extravagance. But let it be carefully observed in what sense and on what grounds he pronounced this paradoxical decision.

7. For ye have the poor with you always, and whosoever ye will ye may do them good : but me ye have not always.

What justified this seeming misappropriation of so large a sum was the extraordinary occasion and the secret motive. To relieve the wants of many is intrinsically better than to anoint the head or feet of one. But if that one is the incarnate Son of God, about to suffer for the sins of men ; if the same opportunity of testifying love to him will never be repeated ; and if that love can be emphatically testified by unction, or by any other costly outward application ; it would be right to make it, even if the poor must lose or suffer so much for it. How much more when such loss is entirely unnecessary, and may be prevented or made good by greater benefactions upon other occasions, which can never be wanting, for the poor shall not cease out of the land (Deut. 15, 11.) To the popish argument (from these words) in favour of a showy and expensive worship, Calvin ingeniously and forcibly replies, that by applauding such an act as only practicable once, our Lord implicitly forbids its repetition and condemns its habitual imitation, just as he would no doubt have rebuked this very woman for the same proceeding, if adopted as an ordinary token of affection.

8. She hath done what she could ; she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

*What she had she did*, i. e. according to her means and opportuni-

ties, she showed her willingness to sacrifice her own enjoyment and possessions to the honour of her Saviour. *She is come (or she undertook) beforehand to anoint my body for the burial*, a Greek word not denoting actual interment, but the whole preparation of the body for the tomb by ablution, shrouding and (among the Jews) anointing and perfuming (compare John 19, 40.) All abuse of this example, as a pretext for substituting such attentions to the Saviour in the place of faith and love and general obedience, is precluded by the obvious consideration, that in this case his omniscience recognized the outward act as merely the spontaneous expression of those inward dispositions, without which it would have been in Mary's case, and has been in the case of thousands, a mere superstitious mockery.

9. Verily, I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, (this) also that she hath done shall be spoken of, for a memorial of her.

That Mary had indeed chosen the good part which could not be taken from her (Luke 10, 42), either by the hypocrisy and avarice of Judas or the utilitarian parsimony of his brethren, is now evinced by one of the most glorious distinctions ever conferred upon a mortal, a distinction which instead of fading with the lapse of time grows daily brighter, and to which, as one has well said, even unfriendly critics and interpreters contribute, as it were, against their will and in the very act of doubt or censure. *Verily* (in the original, amen) *I say to you*, the formula of solemn affirmation which we have already met with so repeatedly (see above, on 3, 28. 6, 11. 8, 12. 9, 1. 41. 10, 15. 29. 11, 23. 12, 43. 13, 30.) *Wherever this gospel*, not the written one before us, as some foolishly imagine and others maliciously pretend, but the history or news of these events, or my whole history on earth, now drawing to a close. *Shall be (is, or may be) preached (heralded, proclaimed) throughout (literally into) the whole world*, also (i. e. in addition to my history, or rather as a part of it, inseparable from it) *what she did* (just now in anointing me, and you found fault with) *shall be told (or talked of) for a memorial of her*, something by which she shall be held in everlasting remembrance, thus perpetuating her praise and the malicious or mistaken judgment passed upon her.

10. And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

From Mark's narrative alone, there might seem to be no connection, except that of chronological succession, between this and the preceding incident; but by combining the accounts, as any justice of the peace would in the case of four credible witnesses, we learn that the reception which our Lord gave to the sanctimonious suggestion of Iscariot, in relation to the ointment, was the proximate occasion, though

of course not the primary cause of that disciple's treachery (see John 12, 10. Luke 22, 3.) Stung by the well-deserved reproof of his hypocrisy and avarice, he yielded to the influences which had long beset him, and went away from the hospitable board of Simon to the chief priests (as rulers of the church and nation), *that he might betray him to them.* The Greek verb strictly means *deliver up* or put into their power; but as this could only be effected by a breach of trust and violation of the most intimate and tender ties, *betray* is not too strong a version.

11. And when they heard (it), they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

*And they hearing* (his proposal) *were rejoiced* at this most unexpected opportunity of compassing their ends, without the delay which they had concluded to be necessary, and yet without popular commotion, against which the traitor undertook to guard (Luke 22, 6.) *And promised*, in answer to his own proposal (Matt. 26, 15), *to give him money*, literally, *silver*, but generically used like the corresponding French word (*argent.*) The precise sum is preserved by Matthew on account of its connection with a signal prophecy (Matt. 26, 15. 27, 4. 9. 10.) Whether the sum there mentioned was the full price of his treason, or only the earnest money, is a question which belongs to the interpretation of that gospel. *Sought how*, inquired for the necessary ways and means, as in v. 1. *Conveniently*, opportunely, at a good time, i. e. safely for himself, and so as to secure his employers from the popular commotion which they so much dreaded.

12. And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare, that thou mayest eat the passover?

At length arrived *the first day of unleavened bread, on which they killed the passover* (i. e. the paschal lamb), an indefinite construction equivalent to the passive form, *the passover was killed*, i. e. habitually or according to custom (see above, on v. 1.) That the reference is not to what was done by the disciples upon this occasion, is clear from the following inquiry where they should make the necessary preparation, of which the killing of the lamb was the essential part. His disciples say to him, *Where wilt thou* (dost thou wish that) *going we prepare?*

13. And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him.

*Two of his disciples*, whose names (Peter and John) have been preserved by Luke (22, 8), though he omits the question put by the disciples, and begins abruptly with our Lord's command. *Bearing* (or carrying) a *pitcher*, properly an earthen vessel, the Greek word denoting not the shape but the material, being a kindred form to that translated *tiling* (tiles) in Luke 5, 19 (see above, on 2, 4.) This completes Matthew's more laconic statement, that he sent them to *such an one*, or to *a certain person*, without naming or describing him, whereas Mark and Luke (22, 10) tell how they were to find him. To the sceptical interpreters this is of course a contradiction, or at least a wholly different tradition. Others admit the accounts to be consistent, but deny that there is any thing described in either but the execution of a previous agreement between Jesus and a friend or acquaintance in the city. But how could the disciples reach this friend by following the first man whom they met with a pitcher of water? To suppose that this too had been previously settled, is a perfectly gratuitous assumption; and if not, it can only be regarded as a prophetic sign, like that which Saul received from Samuel (1 Sam., 10, 1-8), and this would imply, not a previous agreement, but a supernatural foresight and control of human actions.

14. And wheresover he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

*Wherever he may enter* (or *goes in*), *say to the master of the house*, in Greek a single word meaning house-owner, house-master. *Goodman* is often incorrectly read, as if it were the noun *man* with an epithet of praise before it (*goodman*), whereas it is an old English word for *master*, as applied to a house-holder, husband, or the father of a family. A similar mistake is sometimes made by reading *handi-work* (i. e. hand-work), in Ps. 19, 1, as if it were *handy* (i. e. skilful) *work*. *The master* (teacher) *saith* is thought by some to imply that the man was a disciple; but this is not a necessary implication, if the whole proceeding was extraordinary and the result secured by a special superhuman influence. The same consideration will remove all difficulty as to the long delay in seeking this accommodation, when the throng of strangers was so great and the available room already occupied. *Guest-chamber* is in Greek a word properly denoting a place where a traveller unloads his beast, or halts for the night; then an inn or place of public entertainment; then a hired room, as here. *Shall* (or *may*) *eat the passover with my disciples*, who constituted, as it were, his household, and would therefore be expected to unite with him in this observance.

15. 16. And he will shew you a large upper room furnished (and) prepared; there make ready for us. And

his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them, and they made ready the passover.

*Upper room*, a Greek word meaning any room above the ground-floor, or up-stairs, where the best apartments of an Oriental house are usually found. *Furnished*, literally, *spread*, i. e. supplied with tables and couches, such as were used at meals (see above, on 2, 15.) *Prepared*, not the participle of the verb that follows, but a cognate adjective answering to *ready*. There are evidently two preparations for the passover mentioned in this sentence; that of the room, already made by the proprietor; and that of the lamb with its accompaniments, bread and wine and bitter herbs, which was now to be made by the two disciples, and which they did make as recorded in v. 16, where we learn no new fact but the simple execution of the Saviour's orders.

### 17. And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.

*In the evening*, literally, *evening having come* (become, begun to be), the same construction that is used above in 6, 2. 21. 35. 47. 11, 19. *He cometh*, into the city, to the house and room prepared for him.

### 18. And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.

*And they reclining* (see above, on 2, 15) *and eating*, an obvious departure from the primitive and legal usage, but one regarded by our Lord as unessential or he would not have adopted it; a practical reproof of those who, even under a spiritual dispensation, fight about attitudes and postures, as among the weightier matters of the gospel. According to the usual harmonical arrangement, the first words of the Saviour at this interview were those preserved by Luke (22, 15-18), followed by a second strife for the pre-eminence (Luke 22, 24-30), and this by the washing of the feet of the apostles with the following discourse (John 13, 1-20), and this by what is here recorded in all four gospels (Matt. 26, 21. Luke 22, 21. John 13, 21.) *One of you shall betray me* (in the sense before explained on v. 10), *the (one) eating with me*, not merely one of those now at the table and partaking of the paschal meal, but one who, in some special and peculiar sense, might be said to eat with Christ, from which it has been inferred that Judas sat next him upon one side, and partook of the same dish, a supposition favoured by the words of John (12, 26.) Those of Mark, however, may contain an allusion to Ps. 41, 9, which John expressly quotes (13, 18.)

### 19. And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, (Is) it I? and another (said, Is) it I?

The effect of this terrible announcement on the minds of the disci-

ples. *They began* (at once, on hearing it) *to be sorrowful*, or more exactly, *to be grieved*, distressed, as the Greek word is a passive verb and not an adjective. *One by one*, an unusual Greek phrase, the sense of which however is clear from its obvious composition. *And another*, although sometimes ridiculed by hypercritics as unmeaning and superfluous after saying *one by one*, is a perfectly natural expression belonging to the dialect of common life. The first phrase only denotes order and succession, that they asked the question severally not together, while the other says the same thing in another form, that when one had spoken then another would re-echo the inquiry. Far from being a vain repetition or tautology, this supplemental clause adds not a little to the life and spirit of the whole description. *Is it I*, though essentially correct, is not an adequate translation of the Greek phrase, which is negative in form and can only be expressed in English by a circumlocution, being really equivalent to saying, *It is not I, is it?* (see above, on 4, 21.) This is not a difference of mere form, as it shows that each of the disciples, in the act of asking, really asserted his own innocence or disavowed the guilt of treason, and aggravates the shameless hypocrisy of Judas in propounding the same question (Matt. 26, 25.) It is possible, indeed, though hardly probable, that the additional clause (*and another, Is it I?*) may have tacit reference to Judas, and may be intended to distinguish him from the eleven, as no longer one of the same body, but *another*, i. e. an alien and intruder.

20. And he answered and said unto them, (It is) one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish.

*And he answering* (this general inquiry) *said to them* (collectively, as all had asked him.) *One of* (not the simple genitive, but as in v. 18, a preposition meaning *out of*, (from among) *the twelve* (the chosen company now present.) *That dippeth* (i. e. who dips), though correct in sense, might be referred by a hasty reader to the twelve collectively, as an inaccurate expression for *who dip*; but there is no such ambiguity in the original, which strictly means *the (one) dipping*, and like the similar expression in v. 18, seems to describe the traitor as particularly near to Christ at table and in some peculiar sense partaking with him, dipping the bread into the dish or bowl before them, and containing probably a broth or liquid preparation of the bitter herbs which formed part of the paschal supper. If there was only one such dish upon the table of which all made use alike, this answer would be no description of the person, but a mere reiteration of the general fact that one of them would be the traitor, and even that expressed in an unusual manner with the definite article, *the (one) dipping*. If we suppose, upon the other hand, that there were several such bowls or dishes, one of which, or the only one upon the other supposition, was now standing before Christ and his betrayer, both of whom were making use of it at one and the same moment, then this expression (*the one dipping*) is a real designation of the person. John's account of a previous communication between two of the disciples and their master, not alluded to in either

of the other gospels, admits of an easy reconciliation with them, which belongs however to a different place.

21. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him ; but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed ! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

*The Son of Man*, the Messiah, still before you in the form of a servant, and approaching the end of his long humiliation, *goeth*, is now going, taking his departure out of life, about to die, *as it is written*, has been written, has been long on record (see above, on 1. 2. 7. 6. 9. 12. 13. 11. 17.) *Of*, about, concerning him, as the subject of the prophecies referred to, which must therefore be fulfilled in him. *Indeed*, the particle of concession (*μέν*), meaning, it is true, and corresponding to the *but* (*δέ*) in the next clause, both together giving to the verse the antithetical or balanced form, so much affected and admired in Greek prose. *But woe to*, and *alas for* (see above, on 13. 17, both wrath and pity being here appropriate) *that man*, not merely *the man*, or *this man*, but *yonder man*, as if Judas were already at a distance, or perhaps pointing him out as one already severed from that sacred body, of which Christ was the head and the apostles members. *By whom*, through whom, by whose agency. *Betrayed*, delivered over to the power of his enemies (see above, on vs. 10. 11.) The original form of the last clause is peculiar and considerably altered in the version. *Good were it* (literally *was it*) *for him* (or according to the latest text without the verb, *good for him*) *if not born was that man*. This is often urged as one of the most cogent arguments in proof of the eternity of future punishments, because, however they might be prolonged, if they were ever to have an end, such an existence would be still preferable to nonentity. The only objection to this argument in favour of a doctrine clearly set forth elsewhere, is the seeming violence of putting a strict logical interpretation on a phrase which seems to be proverbial and popular. (See above, on 9, 42.)

22. And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake (it), and gave to them, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body.

In close connection with the paschal feast, as a supplement to it and a substitute for it, our Lord, employing the materials already on the table, i. e. the bread and wine partially consumed in the repast just finished, institutes a new solemnity, to be observed forever in the church of the new dispensation. The simplicity of the rite itself, of the mode in which it was established, and of its record in the gospels, is in striking contrast with the pomp and mystery which have since been thrown around it. Of this institution we have four distinct accounts, by Mark (vs. 22-25), Matthew (26, 26-29), Luke (22, 19 20), and

Paul (1 Cor. 11, 23-25.) They differ only as to fulness and the order in which some particulars are stated. Paul's account is in one respect the most authoritative, as it was communicated to him by the risen Saviour (1 Cor. 11, 23.) *As they did eat* (literally, *they eating*) i. e. while they were partaking of the paschal supper. *Taking bread, or a bread (the bread,* Matt. 26, 26), i. e. a loaf or cake of the unleavened bread eaten at the Passover, and which the Jews now make in thin hard cakes or biscuits. *Having blessed,* and at the same time given thanks (Luke 22, 19. 1 Cor. 11, 24), *he brake it* (in two, or into pieces), *and gave to them* (the apostles, still reclining at the table.) *Eat* is omitted by the latest critics in the text of Mark, as an assimilation to that of Matthew. Luke and Paul have neither *take* nor *eat*, both which however are implied in the whole transaction. *This is my body,* common to all four accounts, appears so unambiguous and simple an expression, that it is hard to recognize in it the occasion and the subject of the most protracted and exciting controversy that has rent the church within the last thousand years. That controversy is so purely theological that it has scarcely any basis in the exposition of the text; the only word upon which it could fasten (the verb *is*) being one which in Aramaic would not be expressed, and therefore belongs merely to the Greek translation of our Saviour's language. Until the strong unguarded figures of the early fathers had been petrified into a dogma, at first by popular misapprehension, and at last by theological perversion, these words suggested no idea but the one which they still convey to every plain unbiassed reader, that our Saviour calls the bread his body in the same sense that he calls himself a door (John 10, 9), a vine (John 15, 1), a root (Rev. 22, 16), a star, and is described by many other metaphors in scripture (see John 10, 9.) The bread was an emblem of his flesh, as wounded for the sins of men, and as administered for their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

23. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave (it) to them, and they all drank of it.

The same act is then described in relation to the wine, and almost in the same words. *The cup,* still standing on the table; whether the third or any other of the five cups in the later Jewish ritual, is as unimportant as it is uncertain. *Giving thanks* is not to be distinguished from the *blessing* in the verse preceding, as if he only blessed the bread and only gave thanks for the wine; but as two descriptions of the same act, each presenting one of its component parts, benediction and thanksgiving, from the latter of which the whole service afterwards derived the name of *eucharist.* *They all* (an expression not used of the bread), a sort of prospective or prophetic comment on the withholding of the *cup* from the laity in the Church of Rome.

24. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

*This is my blood* must of course receive the same construction as *this is my body* in v. 22. *That of* (or the blood of) *the new testament* (or covenant.) The Greek noun ( $\deltaιαθήκη$ ), from a verb which means to arrange, dispose, or settle, means itself arrangement, disposition, settlement, with special application to two kinds, a testamentary arrangement and a mutual compact, or a last will and a covenant. The only clear case of the former meaning in the Greek of the New Testament is that in Heb. 9, 16. 17, followed almost immediately (v. 20) by an example of the other, referring, as in this place, to the Mosaic or Levitical covenant, ratified with Israel at Sinai, and sealed with sacrificial blood, prefiguring the blood of Christ as the seal of a new or better covenant (Heb. 7, 22. 8, 6–10. 9, 20. 10, 16. 29. 12, 24. 30.) *That shed, or the (blood) shed, for many*, not only for their benefit but in their stead, as the bloody sacrifices symbolized, not only expiation in the general, or expiation by the sacrifice of life, but vicarious atonement in particular, or expiation by the sacrifice of life for life (Lev. 17, 11.)

25. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

*Amen, I say to you*, see above, on vs. 9. 18, and the places there referred to. *Fruit, offspring*, a term properly applied to animals, but also, by a natural metonymy, to plants. The whole phrase is a periphrasis for *wine*, not merely that before them, but the whole species or variety of beverage. The sense of *grapes*, which would be otherwise more obvious, is here excluded by the verb to *drink*. *That (literally when) I drink it new* (not *anew* or *again*, but fresh and at the same time of a new sort) *in the kingdom of God*. The simplest explanation of these words is that which makes them a solemn though figurative declaration, that the Jewish Passover was now to be forever superseded by the Lord's Supper as a Christian ordinance. These words do not decide the question whether Christ himself partook of this first sacrament, because they may refer to the wine of the paschal not the eucharistical repast.

26. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

*When they had sung a hymn*, in Greek a single word, *hymning* (or *having hymned*), referring no doubt to the series of psalms usually chanted at the Passover and known in the later Jewish ritual as the Great Hallel. There is of course no allusion to the modern distinction between psalms and hymns, nor to the modern use of metre, rhyme, and artificial melody and harmony, all which appear to have been wholly unknown to the ancient church, and have still less authority from scripture than the use of human compositions as an aid in worship, when these are agreeable to God's word in their sentiment and spirit. The original church-music was most probably the simplest kind of chant-

ing, in which all could join without laborious instruction or the cumbersome machinery of choirs, music-masters, singing-schools or instruments, though these appliances are not unlawful or at variance with the character of spiritual worship. *Into the Mount of Olives*, from which, i. e. from Bethany, a village on the eastern slope, our Lord had probably come in to celebrate the Passover, and now goes part of the way back, not as before to spend the night among his friends, but to enter on his passion and to fall into the hands of his betrayer.

27. And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

As it matters little at what precise part of the evening or the meal these words were uttered, there is no need of transposing them in order to assimilate them to the order of John's narrative. The words themselves have also been preserved by Matthew (26, 31) nearly in the same form. They contain a prediction, that Christ's nearest followers, the twelve apostles, should that night be offended in him, not offended at him, in the modern sense, i. e. displeased and alienated in affection, but their faith staggered and their confidence impaired, so that at the first approach of danger, they would be dispersed, thus verifying, although not exhausting, the prophetic picture drawn by Zechariah (13, 7) of God's people scattered like a flock of sheep on the removal of the shepherd, a comparison peculiarly appropriate in this case, on account of the timidity and helplessness, the want of clear views and a strong will, displayed by the apostles at the death of Christ.

28. But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

This discouraging announcement is immediately succeeded and materially qualified by a cheering assurance that the dissolution of the apostolic body would be transient; that it would soon be reconstructed, and that Christ himself, then risen from the dead, would lead the way, or go before them, to their old field of labour, and (as to most of them) their ancient home in Galilee. *Go before* is a pastoral act, referring to the figure of a flock in the preceding verse (compare John 10, 27.) The verse may mean that before the Galileans could return home from the passover, he would be risen from the dead, and once more at the head of the procession (see above, on 9, 32.)

29. But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet (will) not I.

Not contented with this promise, that their separation should be only for a time and followed by a glad reunion, Peter, with characteristic forwardness and self-will, undertakes to make his own case an ex-

ception to the general defection, little imagining in what sense it would prove to be so. Fastening on the first words of our Lord's prediction (*ye shall be offended in me*), and as if he had heard nothing of what followed, he declares, *and if* (even if) *all (the rest)*, or still more arrogantly, *all (men) shall be offended in thee, but (or yet) not I*. This is one of the most unfavourable specimens on record of the dark or weak side of this great apostle's character, because it exhibits, not mere self-sufficiency and overweening self-reliance, but an arrogant estimate of his own strength in comparison with others, particularly with his brethren and associates in the apostolic office. This invidious self-preference is thought by some to be pointedly yet gently hinted at, in that searching question of our Lord to Peter at the sea of Galilee (John 21, 15), "Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me *more than these?*" i. e. more than any of his brethren, the chief of whom were present upon that occasion (John 21, 2), and not one of whom had been allowed to sink so low as to deny his master in the presence of his enemies, except the very one who, in his blindness and self-confidence, gratuitously volunteered the rash engagement in the verse before us.

30. And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this day, (even) in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

In order to leave this self-sufficiency without excuse, our Lord distinctly warns him that within a few hours, on the very day then passing, in the very night then coming on, he would deny all knowledge of the person whom he now declared himself incapable of leaving even for a moment. *To-day* has reference to the complete day of twenty-four hours (what Paul calls the *νυχτίμερον*, 2 Cor. 11, 35); *this night* to that part of it during which darkness prevails; so that the one is a more precise specification of the other. *Before the cock crow twice*, i. e. at the usual times, first about the middle of the night, and then a few hours later, these being the familiar limits of the third watch called *cock-crowing* (see above, on 13, 35.) As the second cock-crow was the one most commonly observed and reckoned as a note of time, the same division of the night may be defined by saying, *before the cock crow* (i. e. in the morning), which is the form of expression actually here employed in all the other gospels (Matt. 26, 34. Luke 22, 34. John 13, 38.) The difference is the same as that between saying *before the bell rings* and *before the second bell rings* (for church or dinner), the reference in both expressions being to the last and most important signal, to which the first is only a preliminary. The existence or occurrence of the latter, though expressly mentioned only in the last phrase, is not excluded by the first, and if previously known, may be considered as included in it. *Deny me*, i. e. profess not to know me, which was a virtual though not a formal abjuration of his friendship and authority.

31. But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die

with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

This additional and more specific premonition, which might almost seem sufficient to prevent its own fulfilment, had a very different effect, not only upon Peter, but upon the rest of the apostles. Its effect on him was to produce a frequent iteration of the vow already uttered. *More vehemently* is not an exact translation of the Greek word, which expresses quantity not quality, and means abundantly, superabundantly, excessively (compare the cognate forms in 6, 51. 12, 40. 44.) *Spake* or *talked*, uttered still more in the same strain, that is not recorded. The effect upon the others was a feeble echo of their ardent spokesman's violent asseverations, a proceeding very natural in such a situation, and no doubt expressive of sincere affection in the minds of most, but no less inconsiderate and rash than Peter's pledge, without its independence and originality; a difference suggested by the very form of words in which it is recorded, *likewise* (or *so too*) *also all said* (or *were saying*.)

32. And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

If the conversation just recorded (vs. 27-31) took place on the way from the city to the Mount of Olives, Mark's arrangement may be reckoned strictly chronological; but even if it passed before they left the house, such resumptions and recurrences are natural and common in all narrative style, and we have met with one already in this chapter (see above, on v. 3.) The verse before us is then to be explained as taking up the story where the writer dropt it (in v. 27), to relate what occurred a little while before. *And they come* (the graphic or descriptive present) *into a place*, not in the vague sense of a spot or situation, which would have required another Greek word (*τόπον*), but in the specific sense which we attach to it in speaking of a gentleman's place, i. e. farm or country seat. (Compare the use of the same word in John 4, 5, where it is rendered *parcel of ground*, i. e. piece of land, and in Acts 1, 18. 4, 34. 5, 3. 28, 7, where it is rendered *field*, *land*, *lands*, *possessions*.) Some suppose its use here to imply the presence or vicinity of dwellings, an assumption which is afterwards applied to the solution of some seeming difficulties in this history. *Of which the name (is) Gethsemane*, or *oil-press*, an appropriate designation of a place on the Mount of Olives. It was not, however, a mere mill or manufactory of oil, but an enclosed oliveyard or garden (John 18, 1), which the local tradition still points out, beyond the valley or brook Kedron, at the foot of Olivet. *Sit (or sit down) here, while (or until) I pray.*

33. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy.

Out of the whole number of apostles he now chooses the same three

who had witnessed the transient but transcendent glories of his metamorphosis or transfiguration (9, 12), to behold the opposite extreme of his deepest abasement and humiliation. These may have been taken with him as the future witnesses of what they saw, or from his natural desire as a man to have friends near him while he suffered, though unable to relieve or help him. Whither he took them is not stated, but most probably into the interior recesses of the garden, while the rest remained about the entrance or not far within it. The idea of some, that they remained in the house of the proprietor or tenant, is both needless and gratuitous. *Sore amazed*, a very strong Greek word denoting both surprise and consternation (see above, on 9, 15), and here used in its strongest sense to signify the preternatural depression and alarm, of which our Saviour condescended to partake, as the representative and surety of his people. The other verb, although of doubtful derivation, is employed by Xenophon and Plato to denote extreme anxiety and anguish.

34. And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death ; tarry ye here, and watch.

He does not conceal his feelings from his three companions, but expresses them in terms still stronger than those used by the evangelist himself. *My soul* is not a mere periphrasis for the pronoun (*I*), but refers his strange sensations more directly to the inward seat of feeling and emotion. *Exceeding sorrowful*, in Greek a compound, also used by Aristotle and Isocrates, and primarily meaning *grieved all round*, encompassed, shut in, by distress on every side. *Unto* (as far as) *death*, so that death itself can add but little to the agonies now suffered ; or so that the least addition must exceed any human power of endurance and result in death. Compare the similar expression of the prophet Jonah (4, 9.) *Tarry* (remain, continue) *here*, i. e. in the spot to which he had conducted them, apart from the remainder of the company. He feels the need of more complete seclusion even from his three companions, as essential to his liberty in prayer. *Watch*, either in the primary and strict sense of the verb both in Greek and English, i. e. keep awake, or in the secondary but more usual sense, be upon your guard, protect yourselves from danger by looking out for its approach at any moment. He does not ask their prayers on his behalf, but only their watchful circumspection on their own.

35. And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

*And going on* (or forward, or before them) *a little* (while or space, more probably the latter), *he fell upon the earth* (or *ground*), not as an ordinary posture of devotion, but as the expression and effect of an extraordinary anguish. Mark first gives the sum and substance of the prayer, and then a portion of its very language. The petition was that

if it were possible, i. e. compatible with God's perfections and designs, the hour or time, so long expected, of his bloody passion, might pass from him, be removed, and cease, without his suffering what now impended. All attempts to reconcile this prayer with the assumption that our Lord did not really desire what he thus asked, are subversive of the very use of language, and directly contradictory to the letter of the scriptures. The key to this mysterious enigma, so far as it can be unlocked to the mind of creatures, is afforded by the obvious consideration, that our Lord endured precisely the same kind of suffering which any mere man would experience in the same situation, but without sin of his own. He therefore shrank from death, and sunk beneath the sense of God's wrath, no less really than we do. This was a necessary incident of his incarnation, and essential to his genuine humanity, his actual possession of a true body and a reasonable soul. But besides this unavoidable participation in the sufferings of the race whose nature he assumed, his sufferings even in the garden were vicarious; he not only suffered with but for men, in their place, instead of them; and though he could not simply as a man partake of sorrows caused by sin, because his own humanity was sinless, he could and did partake of them as the great atoning sacrifice by whose stripes we are healed (see Isai. 53, 5. 1 Pet. 2, 24.) For both these reasons, his expressed desire to escape is to be strictly understood as a necessary incident of his humanity, and also as a part of his vicarious suffering.

36. And he said, Abba, Father, all things (are) possible unto thee ; take away this cup from me : nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.

Having indirectly stated the contents or substance of his prayer, Mark gives his very words, or their equivalents, using the first person. *Abba*, the Aramaic word for *Father*, here preserved by the evangelist like other vernacular expressions which we have already met with (see above, on 5, 41. 7, 11. 9, 5. 11, 21.) He also gives the Greek translation, not as uttered by our Lord himself, but as necessary to its being understood by Gentile readers. This seems more likely in itself, and more consistent with Mark's usage as just stated, than the opinion of some writers, that the two forms, Greek and Aramaic, had become combined in practice so as to form one name, which they prove from Paul's employing the same combination twice in his epistles (Rom. 8, 15. Gal. 4, 6.) But how could such a combination have arisen, if not from the necessities of those to whom the language of our Lord was not vernacular ? It is not only possible, indeed, but probable, that Paul's use of the Aramaic form arose from the tradition of our Saviour's having used it upon this occasion, or perhaps as a customary form of address in his habitual devotions. *All things (are) possible to thee*, a simple recognition of the divine omnipotence, without reserve or metaphysical distinctions. The complete submission, in the last clause, to the Father's will, without regard to his own human wishes, is a glori-

ous triumph of our Lord's obedience, even over the severest trial that can be conceived of. Though he really desired, as a man, to be delivered from the wrath of God, yet, even as a man, he finally consented to endure it, as the only means by which to save his people from their sins. (Matt. 1, 21.)

37. And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest thou not watch one hour?

*He cometh* back to the place where he hath left the three disciples, the distance being mentioned exclusively by Luke (22, 41.) *Findeth*, a discovery surprising not to him but to the reader and the writer. *Sleeping*, not profoundly but at intervals, the impression naturally made being that of a dozing drowsy state, occasioned by distress of mind (Luke 22, 45.) This failure, even of his chosen friends, to comfort and sustain him by their wakeful presence, though foreseen and as it were provided for, could not fail to aggravate our Lord's distress at this momentous crisis. His question to Peter, and through him to all, expresses an upbraiding pity. *Sleepest thou*, is it possible that you are sleeping, whom I brought with me and left here, with an express command to watch while I was praying yonder? *Couldest thou not*, a strong expression, strictly meaning, wast thou not strong enough, or hadst thou not sufficient strength? (see above, on 5, 4. 9, 18.) *One hour* is not given as the precise time of his separation from them, but as a proverbial expression for a very short time. (For the usage of the Greek noun, see above, on 6, 35. 11, 11. 13, 11. 32.)

38. Watch ye, and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly (is) ready, but the flesh (is) weak.

What they could not do from sympathy with him, they might well do from regard to their own safety. *Watch* (keep awake, and on your guard), *and pray* (not for me but for yourselves), *that ye enter not into temptation*, or some trial of your faith and patience, more severe than you can bear. The meaning is not that this trial could be now averted, but that its approach made watchfulness and prayer a more becoming attitude for the apostles than the listlessness and indolence of hopeless sorrow. The last clause is universally regarded as a gracious apology for their remissness, but the antithesis is variously understood, some supposing *flesh* and *spirit* to be simply the *body* and the *mind*; but most interpreters, in better keeping with the usage of the terms, make *flesh* the sinful nature with its culpable infirmities, and *spirit* the higher dispositions and principles produced by grace. The meaning then is that, although their better nature was inclined to do what he required, the remains of natural corruption hindered it.

39. And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words,

*And again going away he prayed the same word.* This was not a vain repetition, such as Christ himself forbids (Matt. 6, 7), but an emphatic reassertion, both of his sincere desire to escape the suffering from which nature necessarily recoiled, and of his equally sincere desire that the question should not be determined by this natural repugnance, but by the sovereign will of God alone. It was the co-existence of these two desires in his soul at the same moment, and the subjection of the one to the other, that gives character and meaning to this great turning point or juncture in the process of our Lord's humiliation and atoning passion. If he had not shrunk from death, it must have been because he was impassible, incapable of suffering, and therefore unfit to become the substitute of sinners doomed to everlasting woe. If he had not humbly consented to endure the will of God for man's sake, the great purpose of his incarnation must have been unaccomplished. But by doing both, both perfectly, and both at once, he proved himself to be indeed *the one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus* (1 Tim. 2, 5.)

40. And when he returned, he found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy ; neither wist they what to answer him.

*And returning he found them again sleeping,* or according to the latest text, *again coming he found them sleeping.* Coming, returning, from his place of retirement, after his second prayer mentioned in the preceding verse. *Heavy* is in Greek a passive participle meaning *burdened*, weighed down, a natural expression, perhaps common to all languages, for the effect of drowsiness upon the eyelids ; for the state described here (as in v. 37) is one of drowsiness and not of deep sleep. *Wist*, the past tense of the old English verb *to wit*, synonymous with *know*. *And they knew not what to answer* (literally *what they should answer*) *him*, i. e. how they should reply to his reproaches, or account for their untimely slumbers. (See above, on 9, 6, and compare Luke 9, 32.)

41. And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take (your) rest : it is enough, the hour is come : behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

*Sleep on now*, literally, *sleep the rest* (of the time). Some editors point the text, and some interpreters explain it, as a question, *do ye sleep on still* (or *still further*) ? But these English phrases are inclusive of the present and describe a state of things continuing unchanged ; whereas the Greek ( $\tauὸ\ λοιπόν$ ) refers only to the future, and always when applied to time answers, not to *yet* or *still*, but to *henceforth* or to *now* as used in the translation. (Compare Acts 27, 20. 1 Cor. 7, 29. 2 Tim. 7, 8. Heb. 10, 13.) The best philological interpreters, therefore, take the verb as an imperative, *Sleep on !* They are not agreed, however,

as to the sense in which this permission or command is to be understood. Some regard it as ironical, implying a still more severe reproof of their ascitancy and inertness. But as such an irony, in such a situation, seems untimely and incongruous, most writers understand it as a kind of remission of a charge which seemed to weigh so heavily upon them. As if he had said, Still asleep! (or once more sleeping!) Well, I will disturb your rest no longer. Sleep on for the rest of the short respite still allowed you. The obvious objection to this explanation is that in the same breath he tells them to awake; but even this is not unnatural, if taken as a sort of after-thought, suggested by the sight or sound of the approaching enemy. Sleep out the little time still left—but no, the hour is come, &c.! *It is enough*, another doubtful and obscure expression found in Mark alone. In Greek it is a single word (*ἀπέχει*), a verb, which according to its etymology and composition, means both to *hold back*; (i. e. to restrain another or one's self) and to *have back* (i. e. to receive again, receive in full, be satisfied.) In the former sense the middle voice is applied in the New Testament to moral and religious abstinence (compare Acts 15, 20, 29. 1 Thess. 4, 3. 5, 22. 1 Tim. 4, 3. 1 Pet. 2, 11), and the active voice to local distance (as in 7, 6 above, compare Luke 7, 6. 15, 20. 24, 13.) In the other sense, the active voice denotes reception both of gifts and payments (as in Matt. 6, 2. 5, 16. Luke 6, 24. Phil. 4, 18), and in one case the recovery of a lost possession (Philem. 15.) According to this varying usage, some explain the verb here as a personal one meaning, *he is (still) afar off*; i. e. the betrayer; or, *it is past*, i. e. the crisis and the agony. But the latter meaning is not justified by usage, and although the former is identical with that expressed in Luke 15, 20, the assertion that the enemy was far off would be neither true nor relevant in this connection. The construction commonly adopted, therefore, is impersonal, derived from the primary sense of receiving, being satisfied, *it is sufficient* (or *enough*.) But there is still a question as to its reference or application, whether to their sleep or to their watching. This depends in some degree upon its being construed with what goes before or follows. If the former, it may mean, I ask no more of you, I no longer ask you to watch with me; if the latter, you have slept enough, the hour is come. This last phrase readily recalls to mind the repeated declaration that our Saviour's hour was not yet come (see John 2, 4. 7, 30, and compare John 12, 23. 13, 1. 32. 17, 1.), a usage which imparts peculiar grandeur and solemnity to this announcement that the long expected crisis had at length arrived. What is meant by *the hour* is particularly stated in the last clause. *The Son of Man*, i. e. the incarnate Son of God, the Messiah in his humiliation, *is delivered*, handed over (the certain event, although still future, being spoken of as actually passing at the moment) *into the hands of the sinners*, i. e. either in a vague sense, of the world or of mankind, considered as the adverse party, or more specifically, of the wicked men who are to be his unjust judges and his cruel executioners. The reference is not merely to the treachery of Judas or of the Jewish rulers in delivering their Messiah to the Gentiles, but to the divine abandonment of Christ to the power of his enemies (compare Acts 2, 23.)

42. Rise up, let us go ; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

*Rise up, or rouse yourselves,* the Greek word properly denoting, not a mere corporeal movement, but the act of awaking out of sleep (see above, on 4, 27. 6, 14. 16. 12, 26). *Let us go,* literally, *lead* (off, or lead the way), the same expression that is used above in 1, 38, and there explained. The supposition of an eminent interpreter, that this is an expression of returning terror, or a half-unconscious call to flight, is not only most unworthy and unpleasing in itself, but entirely at variance with the tenor of the narrative, which clearly represents the great preliminary passion as now past, and the Redeemer as again exhibiting the same serene intrepid spirit that had breathed in his farewell discourses and his sacerdotal prayer preserved by John (14-17.) The interruption of this state of mind and feeling by the conflict in Gethsemane, so far from being a discrepancy between John and the other gospels, is a necessary part of the mysterious process, by which he was bruised for our iniquities and we by his stripes healed (Isai. 53, 5. 1 Pet. 2, 24.) It is no more unnatural or inconsistent than the transit of a traveller through a deep and dark intervening valley, from one mountain to another, only to descend still deeper on the other side. *Behold, lo,* as some thing unexpected and surprising to his hearers. *The one delivering (or betraying) me has (already) approached (or is at hand.)*

43. And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

*And immediately,* Mark's favourite expression, but here used emphatically to denote the instantaneous succession of the facts recorded. *He yet speaking,* so that there could be no interval between his words and the appearance of the enemy. *Cometh,* or rather is at hand, is on the ground, the previous movement being not so much expressed as implied. *One* (or according to the critics, *being one*) *of the twelve*, a member of the Apostolic body. This would be a most superfluous description if it were not intended to suggest the fearful aggravation of the traitor's guilt, arising from his long and intimate relations to his victim, which accounts moreover for the words being found in all the parallels (see Matt. 26, 47. Luke 22, 47.) *A great multitude,* or more exactly, *much crowd,* not great numbers merely, but a promiscuous assemblage, mob, or rabble (see above, on 2, 4. 12. 12. 37. 41.) As the words translated *swords and staves* have a wider sense, and might perhaps be rendered *knives and sticks*, they suggest the idea not of a military force but of an armed mob, carrying such weapons as they might have hastily caught up on hearing the alarm and learning the arrest that was about to take place. This is not inconsistent with the next words, *from the chief priests, &c.,* which relate to the commission held by Judas, the intervening clause being merely a parenthetical description of the crowd

by which he was accompanied. That there was also a civil or military force to secure the execution of the order, is implied here and explicitly affirmed by John (18, 3.) The distinctness and formality with which *the chief priests, scribes, and elders* are enumerated here and elsewhere (see above, on vs. 1. 10, and on 8, 31. 10 33. 11, 27), would be wholly unaccountable except upon the supposition that the writer wished to keep his readers constantly in mind, that this was not a personal but national transaction, being managed both by popular and official agency.

44. And he that betrayed him had given them a token, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: take him, and lead (him) away safely.

*The (one) delivering (betraying) him*, the main idea being not that of treachery but extradition, which however necessarily involved the other (see above, on vs. 10. 11. 18. 21. 41.) *Had given them*, not to the mob, but to the officers by whom he was accompanied. *A token*, not the word translated *sign* in Matt. 26, 48, but a cognate form denoting a concerted signal, not unlike the military *countersign* in English. *I shall kiss*, or *may kiss*, the original construction being more expressive of contingency, as though he had said, ‘if I should kiss any one, that is he.’ The practice of saluting with a kiss prevails to this day, even between men, not only in the East, but in many parts of Europe. Some suppose it to have been the customary salutation used by Christ and his apostles, as it afterwards was practised in the apostolic churches (Rom. 16, 16. 1 Cor. 16, 20. 2 Cor. 12, 12. 1 Thes. 5, 26. 1 Pet. 5, 14.) This would make the act of Judas appear natural and unsuspicuous (though he had so lately left his master and his brethren) except to those who were already in the secret. Others gather from the silence of the history on this point, and the undue familiarity which seems to them implied in such a practice, that the act of Judas was a new and unaccustomed one, and that he did not care for the surprise which it would naturally call forth, as his purpose would by that time be accomplished. *Take him*, a stronger word in Greek meaning master, overpower, seize, secure him (see above, on v. 1, on 1, 31. 3, 21, 5, 41. 6, 17. 7, 27. 12, 12.) *Lead him away* might in accordance with Greek usage, mean to death or execution (as in Acts 12, 19), but is here no doubt to be taken in its usual and proper sense, take him off, i. e. in custody or as a prisoner, to those who sent you. *Safely*, securely, or according to the derivation of the Greek verb, infallibly, i. e. without fail. This injunction has by some been represented as an absurd precaution against Christ’s miraculous power, and therefore probably a fiction, while another class regard it as a symptom of that madness or infatuation which was natural in Judas’s position. Perhaps more probable than either is the supposition that, although he knew our Lord’s aversion to the use of his extraordinary power for his own protection and defence, he may have apprehended some attempt to rescue him by his disciples, such as actually took place but was instantly arrested. (See below, on v. 47.)

45. And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, Master, and kissed him.

*As soon as he had come*, in Greek a single word, *coming* (or having come), i. e. to Gethsemane, which Judas well knew as a place of previous resort (John 18, 2.) *Goeth* a compound form of the same participle, *coming to* (or *up to*) him. *He saith* (or *says*) as if the scene were still actually passing, *Rabbi, Rabbi*, the original vernacular expression, here preserved by Mark (as in 9, 5. 11, 21 above), but without a Greek translation (as in v. 36. 5, 41. 7, 34), because the title had become familiar even to the Gentile reader. The notion entertained by some, that this form of address was less respectful or affectionate, and therefore used by Judas when the others said *Lord* or *Master*, is entirely groundless, as may be seen by a comparison of John 1, 38. 49. 3, 2. 26. 6, 25, even in the English version, and of 9, 5. 11, 21 above and John 4, 31. 9, 2. 11, 8, in the original. *Kissed him*, an emphatic compound of the verb in the preceding verse, without exact equivalent in English, but denoting that he kissed him in an affectionate and earnest manner, adding to the guilt of the betrayal by the manner of committing it. This variation of expression, while it serves to illustrate the resources of the language for the accurate expression of minute distinctions, also shows the precision both of Mark and Matthew in employing it, as the stronger term would have been misplaced in recording what the traitor said, but is highly appropriate and expressive in relating what he did.

46. And they laid their hands on him, and took him.

Omitting Christ's upbraiding questions, here preserved by Luke (22, 48) and Matthew (26, 50), Mark relates the execution of the traitor's orders (as recorded in v. 44) and the actual seizure of that sacred person which had so often and so long escaped them. *Laid*, literally, *threw or cast*, but without implying undue force or violence. *Took him*, the verb used above in v. 44, and there explained.

47. And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

*But one or some (one)*, an expression which may have been intended to suggest that this was the random act of a single person. *Of those standing by* might seem to intimate that it was a chance spectator or an unknown individual; but we learn from Matthew (26, 51) that it was *one of those with Jesus*, and from John (18, 10) that it was Simon Peter, both which statements, although more precise than Mark's, are perfectly consistent with it, yet regarded by the sceptical critics as unquestionable tokens of a variant tradition. The idea that the earlier evangelists suppressed the name of Peter, lest it should involve him in danger as the author of this injury, is utterly at variance with the fact that he was recognized a few hours after by a near relation of the man

whom he had wounded (John 12, 26), and also with the fact that all complaint on that score had been silenced by our Saviour's last recorded miracle of healing (Luke 22, 51.) *Drawing the sword*, which he carried, one of the two mentioned in Luke 22, 38. The word translated *sword* is not the classical expression, but one used in Homer to denote the knife worn by his heroes with the sword, and used to slaughter animals. In later Greek, it was applied to military weapons, first to certain new varieties or forms, and then in the New Testament to swords in general. *Smote*, struck, wounded, the same Greek word being used by John (18, 10.)

48. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and (with) staves to take me?

*Answering their thoughts or actions* (see above, on 9, 5. 10, 24. 12, 35.) *To them*, the whole crowd, but especially the officers who came with a commission to arrest him and to represent the national authorities. The last clause may be also read without interrogation, *Ye are come out*, which appears to be more natural. *As against a thief*, or *robber*, as the Greek word properly denotes, and the context here requires, since such a posse would not be required for the detection or pursuit of a mere thief, in the modern and restricted sense of the expression (see above, on 11, 17.) *Swords and staves*, or *knives and sticks*, as in v. 43, the former phrase suggesting the idea of armed officers, civil and military, and the latter that of a promiscuous rabble armed with clubs or bludgeons and such other weapons as could be provided at a moment's warning. *To take* (arrest) *me*, not the verb employed in vs. 44. 46, but one supposed to signify the act of seizing with both hands, and frequently applied in the New Testament to legal apprehension or arrest. (Besides the parallels, Matt. 26, 55. Luke 22, 54. John 18, 12, see Acts 1, 16. 12, 3. 23, 27. 26, 21.) The reproach implied in these words, whether construed interrogatively or affirmatively, is that they should now come out against him as a formidable public enemy, after letting slip so many opportunities of safe and quiet seizure, as particularly mentioned in the next verse.

49. I was daily with you in the temple, teaching, and ye took me not; but the scriptures must be fulfilled.

*Daily*, day by day, not all day, but from day to day, referring no doubt chiefly to the days immediately preceding, though possibly not without allusion to his former visits. *With you*, a much stronger phrase in Greek, meaning *at you*, close to you, in intimate proximity and contact with you (see above, on 1, 33. 2, 2. 4, 1. 5, 11. 22. 6, 3. 9, 19. 11, 1. 4.) *In the temple*, i. e. its area or courts, within the sacred enclosure (see above, on 11, 11. 15. 16. 27. 13, 1. 3) *Teaching*, not merely present as an idler or a looker-on, but publicly engaged in my official work, and therefore all the more accessible, both in the way of

accusation and of seizure. *And ye took me not*, or did not seize me (see above, on vs. 44, 46), as ye might have done with so much ease and safety. The force of this rebuke may seem to be impaired by the fact, that the rulers of the Jews had been deterred by the fear of popular resistance, of which there now seemed to be no longer any danger. But our Saviour may have reference to this very change, as his words were not addressed to the rulers, but to their representatives, official and popular. The translation of the last clause has effaced a striking trait of the original, an instance of the figure called aposiopesis, in which the conclusion is suppressed or left to be supplied by those who read or hear the sentence (see above, on 7, 11.) The literal translation is, *but that the scriptures might be fulfilled*—and there he stops abruptly. Some supply, ‘now seize me !’ which however would require a different verbal form before it ; others, ‘ye are now allowed to take me,’ which is open to the same objection. The formula most readily suggested and agreeable to usage (compare Matt. 1, 22. 21, 4. 26, 56.) is, *all this comes to pass* (or *happens*), but nothing need be formally supplied, the sentence being left intentionally incomplete in form, although the sense is doubtless that expressed in the translation.

### 50. And they all forsook him and fled.

*And leaving him*, to himself and to his enemies, the verb employed above in v. 6 and in 13, 2, 34, and other places there referred to. *All fled*, a clear case of the strongest universal term being qualified and restricted by the context, as it can only mean all his followers or disciples, as predicted in v. 27, but repudiated as incredible by those who now fulfilled it by their own free actions. This change is far from being inconsistent with experience and human nature, or, as the Germans say, unpsychological. The very rashness of the promise (v. 31), and of the impotent attempt at self-defence when it was hopeless (v. 47), might have served as premonitions of the shameful dereliction here recorded. To the objection sometimes made, that so explicit a prediction must defeat its own fulfilment, the reply is, that such prophecies are uttered only when the issue is too certain to be thus prevented, as in the case of Judas (Matt. 26, 25. John 13, 27) and Peter (see above, on v. 30.) It may even be admitted, in a certain sense, that the prophecy contributed to its own fulfilment, by enfeebling or destroying the factitious courage, which existed while the danger was still future or remote.

### 51. 52. And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about (his) naked (body); and the young men laid hold on him, and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

This incident, recorded only here, has occasioned much discussion, not because of its intrinsic moment, or of any light thrown by it on the history, but simply from the difficulty of determining why it was in-

serted. Of the various conjectures upon this point, one of which supposes the young man to have been John, another James, another some one from the garden of Gethsemane, another some one from the house in Jerusalem which they had lately left, there seem to be only two that are not perfectly gratuitous. The first is, that the young man was the author of this gospel, who has then preserved a vivid reminiscence of his own, connected with the scenes of that night long to be remembered, yet with characteristic modesty suppressed his name. This, though merely a conjecture, is intrinsically credible and partially corroborated by the fact that Mark, whose name a uniform tradition has connected with this gospel, was a young man living with his mother in Jerusalem a few years later (Acts 12, 12), and not improbably at this time also. This much at least may be asserted with some confidence, that if the incident occurred to any person otherwise well known, it was no doubt the evangelist himself. The remaining supposition is, that the youth who thus escaped was entirely unknown and unimportant, and that the incident itself is mentioned, only as a vivid trait in the recollections of some one who witnessed the whole scene, perhaps Peter, whom another old and uniform tradition represents as having influenced in some way the production of this gospel, and contributed some of its most valuable matter. *A certain one*, the same expression as in v. 47, and here too meaning a single insulated individual. *Followed him* (Jesus), either as a friend, or out of curiosity, aroused by the nocturnal tumult. *A linen cloth*, in Greek a single word, denoting the material and not the shape, which may have been either that of a sheet under which he was sleeping, or of a loose garment worn at night, in either case implying that he was undressed and probably just risen out of bed. *Cast about*, in the original, agrees not with the garment but the man, and means that he was wrapped or muffled in it, *on* (his) *naked* (body.) *The young men* (if genuine) may mean the officers or soldiers, or more probably than either, the disorderly young men who are found in every mob, and who delight in acts of wanton violence. But the latest critics follow some of the most ancient manuscripts and versions in expunging these words (*the young men*) and leaving the verb perfectly indefinite (*they seize him*).

53. And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.

*Led away*, from the garden of Gethsemane where he was arrested, and across the brook or valley of the Kedron, into the city of Jerusalem again. *To the High Priest*, i. e. to his residence, and into his immediate presence. Mark takes no notice of the confusion then existing in the office of High Priest, occasioned by the arbitrary interference of the Romans, so that there were several High Priests alive at one time, i. e. several who had actually exercised the office, though the law of Moses recognized but one, and that one the hereditary representative of Aaron. This appears to have been Annas, who was therefore probably re-

garded by the strict Jews as the legitimate incumbent; but having been displaced by the Romans, and deprived of all direct official power, he appears to have secured the nomination of his own son and son-in-law, as his successors, thereby maintaining indirectly his own influence, and probably the title too in common parlance, which accounts for Luke's mentioning both Annas and Caiaphas as High Priests at the same time (Luke 3, 2), and for John's saying here that they brought him first to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was High Priest that year (John 18, 13), which does not mean that it was now a yearly office, even under Roman domination, but is merely an allusion to the frequency with which the incumbents were displaced by the authorities. John adds (18, 24) that Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas, before whom he was formally arraigned. With greater brevity, but equal truth, Mark speaks of one High Priest and one appearance of our Lord, before him. *And there come together with him*, i. e. with Jesus into the High Priest's presence, or *there come together to him*, i. e. to the High Priest himself, which last is the construction now preferred. *The chief priests, scribes, and elders*, are again distinctly named (see above, on v. 43) as the three great orders or estates, composing the synedrion or sanhedrim, which represented the whole church and nation, and now, as soon it was day (Luke 22, 66), convened at the residence of Caiaphas, to deliberate and act upon the case of Jesus.

54. And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest; and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.

However unexpected the fact here recorded, there is probably no reader who, as soon as it is stated, does not feel it to be perfectly in keeping with what he knows already of the character of Peter, who would scarcely seem to be himself if he continued in concealment, and whose reappearance on the scene, and subsequent performance there, exhibit just the strength and weakness which together constitute the native temper of this great apostle. Without saying how he gained admission, which is afterwards explained by John (18, 15), Mark simply states that Peter followed *from afar* (or from a distance, see above, on 5, 6. 8, 3. 11, 13), implying that at first he had retreated with the rest, but now ventured to approach the place of trial, under the influence no doubt of true affection for his master, and not of a mere idle curiosity which would scarcely have induced him to incur such hazard for its gratification. *Even into* answers to three particles in Greek, the first of which (*εώς*) means *unto*, up to, or as far as; the second (*ἔσω*) *inside* or *within*; the third (*εἰς*) *into*; an unusual accumulation of such words, suggesting that his going so far was a strange and unexpected thing. *The palace*, literally, *hall* or *court*, and probably denoting not the whole house but a part of it. The idea of a palace, i. e. of a princely mansion, which tradition has attached to this word, here and in the parallels (Matt. 26, 58. Luke 22, 55. John 18, 15), appears to have no adequate foundation in the usage either of the word or of the office, as

we have no reason to believe that the High Priests at any time were lodged in royal style, but least of all at this time, when the tenure of their place was so precarious, and any such display would probably excite the jealousy of Roman power. There is no objection to the word, however, in the simple sense of an official residence, as the bishops' palaces in England are so called without necessarily implying either magnitude or splendor. *Sat*, was sitting, *with the servants*, not mere domestics but more probably *the officers*, as the word is rendered in John 7, 32, and often in that gospel, i. e. the executive or ministerial agents of the national authorities. *And warming himself at the fire*, literally, *the light*, which they had kindled, as it was a cold night (John 18, 18), probably according to the custom of the east, in the centre of the hall or open court already mentioned. This description is so natural and lifelike, yet so little likely to occur to a fictitious or even to a later writer, that it seems to vouch for the contemporary origin of this whole record.

55. And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus, to put him to death, and found none.

Here begins the judicial process (falsely so called) by which the Messiah, whose advent Israel had expected for ages, and for whose sake the theocracy existed, was to be denied and put to death as an impostor. The national character of the proceeding is again suggested by the mention of *the chief priests and the whole synedrion* (or *council*), this collective designation being substituted for the scribes and elders, who are usually mentioned with the chief priests as composing it. (See above, on vs. 1. 10. 43. 53.) There is something in the very variation of the parallel accounts, in their description of this body, that appears to be significant. While Mark names only the chief priests distinctly, comprehending both the other orders under the generic title, and Matthew distinguishes the elders also, leaving the scribes to be included under the residuary phrase, Luke on the other hand particularly mentions the chief priests and scribes, but instead of elders uses the collective term of kindred origin, *the presbytery* (eldership or senate) *of the people* (Luke 22, 63.) In this variety of forms, to all but sceptics less suspicious than exact resemblance, the evangelists convey the one idea, that this legal persecution was the work, not of private prosecutors, but of public representatives and rulers. *Sought for witness* (i. e. testimony, evidence) *against Jesus*, to (with a view or in order to) *kill him* (or put him to death). The necessity of this preliminary measure arose from the legal requisition of two witnesses in every trial for a capital offence (see Deut. 17, 6. 7. 19, 15. Heb. 10, 28, and compare Matt. 18, 16. 1 Tim. 5, 19. Rev. 11, 3), which seems to have been construed strictly as requiring double testimony to the same act. It was necessary, therefore, to find two who had been present at the same or a precisely similar offence, whatever it might be. The difficulty, then, was not that *they found*

*none*, as the English Bible renders it, but, as the Greek words literally mean, *they did not find* (what they were seeking), i. e. probably two witnesses to one and the same act. It would have been strange indeed if no one could be found to testify at all; but it was not strange that they found it hard to obtain two concurrent witnesses to one and the same thing. The only other sense in which it could be absolutely said that they *found none*, is that although they could easily prove many acts and words of Christ, they did not amount to a capital offence, so that in reference to their object, which was to destroy him, they may be said to have *found none*.

### 56. For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together.

That it was not the mere want of witnesses that hindered their proceedings, is now stated most distinctly, *for many bare false witness against him*. This does not necessarily denote a sheer invention, or even a deliberate perversion of the facts alleged, but merely their objective untruth, whether they believed them to be true or not. The gross misapprehension of our Saviour's words and actions, into which the Jews continually fell, and from which his own disciples were not wholly free, would, even in the absence of malignant purpose, be enough to falsify their testimony; how much more when such a purpose did exist and operate, whether in a great or small degree. The literal translation of the last clause is, *and equal the testimonies were not*. Some suppose *equal* to mean *adequate*, sufficient for their purpose, which affords a good sense but is hardly justified by usage. Others understand it to mean *even*, uniform, harmonious, and with the negative, inconsistent, contradictory. This also gives a good sense, but the fact implied is hardly probable, to wit, that all the witnesses directly contradicted one another. Free from both these objections is the explanation which supposes *equal* to have reference to the legal requisition of two concurrent witnesses to one fact, which it might not be so easy to obtain as a multitude of independent witnesses to different words or actions.

### 57. And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying,

At length they seemed to have attained their purpose, having met with a plurality of witnesses to one remarkable expression of the Saviour. *And certain* (i. e. some) *arising*, i. e. coming forward, making their appearance, or literally standing up before those who examined them. The particular charge here alleged against him may appear to be a strange one in comparison with many others which they might have urged. And so it would be, if they had selected it themselves as the ground of accusation, but it seems to have been forced upon them as the only charge supported by two witnesses, with even the appearance of consistency, and this proved only an appearance. The charge

was false, not because Christ had never spoken such words, for we have them upon record, but because it transformed into a threat what he had uttered as a promise, or offered to do if they themselves destroyed the temple, and because they wholly disregarded his allusion to the meaning of the sanctuary under the Old Testament, as a symbol of God's presence and inhabitation, to be superseded by the advent of the Messiah.

58. We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.

*We heard him saying*, probably on the occasion mentioned by John (2, 18-21), and if so at the very opening of his ministry, and several years before the accusation. *Destroy*, the same verb that is used above in 13, 2, and there explained. *This temple*, not the word which has occurred so frequently before (11, 11. 15. 16. 27. 12, 35. 13, 1. 3. 14, 49), but one which denotes the sacred edifice, the sanctuary, or temple properly so called. The form of the original is here peculiarly expressive, although foreign from our idiom, *the temple—this—the handmade*. *Made without hands* is in Greek a single word, the same that occurs just before but with a negative particle prefixed. *Within*, literally, *through*, i. e. during, in the course. *I will build* stands emphatically at the close of the original sentence.

59. But neither so did their witness agree together.

*But neither so*, literally, *and not even so* (or *thus*), i. e. according to the statement made in the preceding verse. *Was their testimony equal*, the same expression that occurs in the last clause of v. 56, and admitting of the same variety of explanation, but most probably denoting, here as there, that they could not succeed in finding two concurrent witnesses to this one speech of Christ, or any other of his words and actions, which could possibly be made the ground of a specific charge against him. In the present instance, as the witnesses all varied from the truth, they naturally varied from each other, so that no two were so far agreed as to satisfy the requisitions of the law. (See above, on v. 55.)

60. And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what (is it which) these witness against thee?

*And arising*, standing up, *in the midst*, i. e. within the body of the council, and, as some understand it, in the centre of the semicircle formed by the assembly according to an old tradition of the Jews themselves. *Into the midst* is the exact translation, which apparently implies a previous movement of the high priest from his seat to some conspicuous position for the purpose of addressing him. All this

seems to presuppose a formal meeting of the Sanhedrim, and to show that the inquiry mentioned in v. 55 was not a private or preliminary one, but the commencement of the public process, as appears indeed from its being there ascribed to the whole body. As the witnesses did not agree together, the accused was not obliged to answer or defend himself, and therefore by his silence only exercised the right belonging to the humblest Jew according to the law of Moses. At the same time, he knew well that all defence would be entirely unavailing (Luke 22, 67. 68), and besides had no desire to be acquitted by them. *Answerest thou nothing?* is in Greek still stronger from the double negative (*οὐκ οὐδέν*), which cannot be expressed in English without changing the whole sense (see above, on 3, 27. 5, 37. 6, 5. 12, 14.) The meaning of the question may be either, ‘hast thou nothing to reply, dost thou acknowledge what they say?’ or ‘wilt thou not reply? dost thou treat the testimony with contempt?’ The latter agrees better with the following question, *what do these testify against thee?* i. e. is it true or false? and if true, how dost thou explain it, or justify thy conduct? This was an attempt to make the prisoner supply the want of testimony by his own confession, a proceeding utterly abhorrent to the spirit and the practice of the English law, though familiar to the codes and courts of other nations, both in ancient and in modern times.

61. But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?

As our Lord persisted in refusing all reply to these vexatious questions, on a charge not only false but unsupported even by false witnesses, the high priest suddenly dismisses that complaint as unavailing, and propounds to him the real question now at issue. It is perfectly consistent with Mark’s statement, although not included in it, that this question was put, not in the same way with those before it, but in the solemn form of a judicial adjuration, or an oath by the living God, Jehovah, as distinguished from all false gods (Matt. 26, 63.) Such an oath the priests were empowered to administer (Num. 5, 19), and such an oath our Lord did not refuse when lawfully propounded, thus explaining by his own act the true meaning of his precept, Swear not at all (Matt. 5, 34), as not forbidding solemn and regular judicial oaths. *Art thou the Christ, the Messiah?* (see above, on 1, 1. 8, 29. 9, 41. 12, 35. 13, 21.) *The Son of the Blessed,* i. e. of the Blessed God, an epithet which frequently occurs in the Old Testament. It has been disputed whether this is a mere paraphrase or repetition of the first clause, or an independent question. In the one case the meaning is, ‘Art thou the Messiah, whom we know to be the Son of God?’ In the other case, ‘Dost thou claim to be, not only the Messiah, but the Son of God?’ The former is the natural and obvious construction, and is defended on the ground that, as the Messiah was called the *Son of Man* on the authority of Dan. 7, 13, so he was likewise called the *Son of God* on the authority of Ps. 2, 7, both which passages were cer-

tainly regarded by the ancient Jews as Messianic prophecies. That the higher title was so used in the time of Christ, is argued from such passages as John 1, 49. 3, 17. 36. 5, 25. 27. 9, 35. 11, 27. 20, 31. Acts 9, 20. The only reason for a different opinion is the supposed defection of the Jews from the doctrine of Messiah's deity, implied in our Lord's question in relation to the 110th Psalm (see above, on 12, 35-37.) But all the known facts may be harmonized by simply assuming that *Son of God* was still a current name of the Messiah, though its meaning had been lowered and extenuated. The question still recurs, however, whether the high priest intended merely to inquire if he claimed to be the Christ, employing two familiar Messianic titles, or whether he designed to ask if he claimed also to be a divine person. The latter is more probable, because the second title would be otherwise superfluous; because the Saviour had already been accused of calling God his father and of thereby making himself God (John 5, 18); and because his answer to the question was treated as blasphemy, for which a mere assumption of the Messianic office would have furnished no colourable ground or pretext.

62. And Jesus said, I am, and ye shall see the Son of Man, sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Not only because solemnly enjoined in due form of law, but also because thereby furnished with a public opportunity of making known his claims, our Lord now answers with sublime conciseness and simplicity, I AM, i. e. I am both the Christ and the Son of the Blessed, perhaps not without allusion to the significant divine name once revealed to Moses (see above, on 6, 50, and compare Ex. 3, 14.) To this categorical and unambiguous response, he adds what may seem to be a mere prediction, but is also both an explanation and a pledge or confirmation of the foregoing answer. ‘Yes, I am the Son of God, but no less really the Son of Man, and you shall one day see the very form now arraigned and about to be maltreated in your presence, no longer as the form of a servant, but of a king seated at the right hand of power, as a sharer in the honours of omnipotence, and coming with the clouds of heaven.’ (See above, on 13, 26.)

63. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses?

This bold and perhaps unexpected avowal of his Messianic claims, in their most explicit and offensive form, was eagerly caught at by the high priest, as supplying the deficiency of proof from other quarters, and enabling them out of his own mouth to condemn him. He proceeds, therefore, to rend (or tear open and apart) his clothes, not the loose outer dress (see above, on 5, 27. 6, 56. 10, 50. 13, 16), but the tunic or under-garment, which, according to Maimonides, were both (or all) to be subjected to this process. The act itself was not a sign

of personal mourning, which as such was not permitted to the high priest (Lev. 10, 6), but of official detestation and abhorrence at the blasphemy supposed to have been uttered. *Why yet (or still) have we need of witnesses?* the difficulty under which the cause had laboured, and by which it would probably have been defeated, if our Lord had not spontaneously supplied what was wanting by his own confession.

64. Ye have heard the blasphemy; what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.

*Ye heard the blasphemy* (just uttered), not the bare claim to prophetic honours, or even to those of the Messiah considered as a mere man, which could not have been described as blasphemy, but the distinct assertion that he was the Son of God, and therefore, as the Jews correctly understood it, a partaker of the divine essence. (See the same interpretation of his language, and the same charge founded on it in a more popular informal way, John 10, 30-36.) *What think ye?* literally, *what appears to you, or how does it appear to you?* This is not a colloquial demand for their opinion, but most probably the customary form of taking votes or putting questions in the Sanhedrim, and therefore followed by an unanimous decision of the body. *Guilty of death*, i. e. justly liable, obnoxious, or exposed to it. We know of one exception to this statement (see below, on 15, 43); but the dissenting senator was probably not present at this meeting.

65. And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophesy; and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.

The sentence having been pronounced, its execution was partially forestalled by cruel and unmanly treatment of their prisoner. This might seem from the concise account of Mark and Matthew (26, 67) to have proceeded from the senators themselves, which in itself is credible enough, as we may learn from the subsequent experience of Stephen (Acts 7, 54. 57) and Paul (Acts 23, 2) before the same tribunal. We find, however, conduct of the same kind, although not precisely at the same time, ascribed by Luke (22, 63) to those who held Jesus, i. e. to the officers and soldiers who had charge of him, and these may possibly have been the actors in this shameful scene, both before and after his arraignment. Even then, however, such maltreatment would not have been possible without the permission or connivance of the Sanhedrim itself. The insults were particularly aimed at his pretensions to prophetic inspiration, now supposed to be exploded and declared invalid by the highest theocratical authority. *And some began to spit upon him*, universally regarded as the strongest and the grossest indication of contemptuous abhorrence. *And to cover his face*, literally, *cover it around*, i. e. completely, so as to prevent his seeing. *Prophesy*, not in the restricted modern sense of foretelling something future, but

in the primary and wide sense of speaking by inspiration or under a special divine influence. The demand may have been made in this vague form, but also in the shape of more specific taunts, one of which has been preserved by Matthew (26, 68), and of course regarded by the sceptics as a discrepant tradition. The express mention of the *servants* (i. e. officers, see above, on v. 54) in the last clause seems to favour the opinion that the acts described in the first, disgraceful as they are, were those of their superiors in rank and station. The rest of this clause is a periphrastic version of a rare and doubtful phrase which literally means, *they threw him* (or *threw at him*) *with slaps*, i. e. struck him with the open hand; but some explain the last word to mean strokes with a rod. In either case, the essential fact remains the same, to wit, their brutal violation of that sacred person by blows as lawless as they were inhuman.

66. 67. And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest; and when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.

During the intervals of these proceedings, Christ's prediction with respect to Peter had been lamentably verified. The several steps of his denial, though protracted through the night, and parallel to those of our Lord's examination, are here put together so as to form one connected narrative. The confusion and obscurity confessedly belonging to this subject are precisely such as might have been expected *a priori* from the actual confusion of the scenes described, the multiplicity of actors, the incessant movement to and fro, and the consequent variety of forms in which the story might be told with equal truth, according to the few facts chosen out of many by the several historians. While all agree in three distinct denials on the part of Peter, none of them assert that there were only three demands or accusations, a restriction which would really have been suspicious and improbable, considering how many were arrayed against him. By assuming what is constantly occurring in such cases, though rejected by the sceptics as a sheer invention of the harmonists, to wit, that Peter was assailed by many with the same demand, and also that the speakers moved from place to place, as they naturally would at a time of such excitement and commotion, all apparent discrepancies may be reconciled without the use of force or artifice. With these remarks upon the mutual relation of the four accounts, we may proceed to examine more particularly that before us, leaving the others to be similarly handled elsewhere. *Peter being in the court below*, not in the lower story of the house or palace, as the English version seems to mean, but in the open space around which it was built, and which was lower than the floor of the surrounding rooms. *One of the maids* (or female servants) *of the high priest*, perhaps the one who kept the door (John 18, 17), though John's statement may refer to a previous challenge made when he and Peter

entered (18, 15), whereas this took place while he was at the fire warming himself (see above, on v. 54.) Seeing him (thus employed), and no doubt struck with something in his aspect, either previously familiar or unlike that of the men around him, looking at him (something more than simply seeing him), she says (directly to him), *And thou (or thou too) wast with the Nazarene Jesus*, a contemptuous description commonly applied to Christ and to his followers long after. (See above, on 1, 24. 10, 47, and compare Matt. 2, 23. Acts 24, 5.) There is no need of supposing that these questions were malignant, or designed to implicate Peter in the charge against his master. If indicative of any thing beyond mere curiosity, it was probably of interest in the case of Malchus (see above, on v. 47, and compare John 18, 26.)

68. But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch ; and the cock crew.

Taken completely by surprise, and probably considering only the possible hazard to himself, Peter answered with a prompt and categorical denial that he even understood the question, a denial rendered still more emphatic by the use of two synonymous verbs, rendered *know* and *understand*. Disturbed, however, by the question of the woman, he now passes from the court itself into the *fore-court* or vestibule, i. e. the front part of the house, through which lay the passage from the court into the street, most probably an arched gateway, as in many houses at the present day, not only in the East, but in European cities, such as Rome and Paris. This movement may have been intended to prepare for his escape from the embarrassing position into which he had been brought by his own rashness. But here he meets with two interruptions ; first, the crowing of the cock, i. e. the earlier or midnight crow, which marked the beginning of the third watch, as the morning crow announced its close. The other gospels refer only to the latter, whereas Mark distinctly mentions both, perhaps aided by the indelible impressions of the person most immediately concerned, who, though he does not seem to have been much affected at the moment by this early cock-crow, no doubt afterwards remembered having heard it. This premonitory signal of his fall might possibly have hastened his departure, but for another interruption mentioned in the next verse.

69. And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is (one) of them.

The same woman who had challenged him before, and who was probably still on duty at the door, *seeing him again*, perhaps about to leave the house, began to call the attention of the bystanders to him, by asserting positively what she only asked before, saying, *This (man) is of them* (from among them, one of them), i. e. of the followers of Jesus. It would have been strange indeed if this suggestion had excited no attention and occasioned no inquiry. All experience and anal-

ogy would lead us to expect precisely what we find recorded in the gospels, namely, that several began at once to question him, another woman (Matt. 26, 71), a man (Luke 22, 58). and some who had been around the fire (John 18, 25), especially a kinsman of the person whom Peter himself had wounded (John 18, 26.) The attempt to represent this most natural and therefore most harmonious variety as contradiction or a variant tradition is, like all the other efforts of the same sort, lost upon the great mass of American and English readers.

70. And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art (one) of them ; for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth (thereto.)

*And he again denied*, not merely that he was a follower of Christ but, as we learn from Matthew (26, 72), that he even knew him. There is here a sensible gradation or advance upon his first denial, in the personal and disrespectful form now given to it (*I know not the man.*) But this appears to have had no effect upon the persons round him ; for *after a little*, a relative expression perfectly consistent with the more exact specification of *about one hour* (Luke 22, 59), during which it no doubt formed the subject of a lively conversation and discussion, *those standing by*, who had been thus employed, *again said to Peter*, stating the conclusion to which they had come, *Surely (certainly) thou art of them* (i. e. thou belongest to them), as in v. 69. For this conclusion they assign a specific reason, that he was a Galilean, as most of Christ's disciples were, and as he was himself by residence, as well as by reputed birth. For this they also gave a reason, that his *speech* (talk or dialect) *resembled* (that of Galilee), probably in accent and pronunciation, which, according to the Jewish books, differed from that of Judea in confounding the gutturals and the two last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Provincial differences of this kind are mentioned very early in the Sacred History. (See Judges 12, 6.)

71. But he began to curse and to swear, (saying) I know not this man of whom ye speak.

This is the third stage or degree of the denial, in which Peter, not contented with repeating what he said before, abjures still more distinctly and contemptuously all acquaintance with the Saviour, and as if this most disloyal lie were still too little, corroborates it with profane oaths and an impious imprecation of divine wrath on himself, if he even knew the man of whom they spake, and to whom he had, a few hours earlier, made the strong self-confident assurance recorded in vs. 29. 31. *He began* (perhaps implying that he afterwards continued) *to anathematize* (or curse himself if what he said was false) *and swear* (or invoke God as a witness of its truth.) Besides the other aggravations of this fearful sin, its combination of falsehood, ingratitude, disloyalty

and breach of promise, it appears to have involved a momentary lapse into sinful habits long since forsaken, as the supposition, that Peter had been once addicted to profaneness, is not only natural and credible, but serves to explain his gratuitous resort to such means of corroboration in the case before us.

72. And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

It was not from any natural cause, but by a special providential ordering, that the second or morning cock-crow had so different an effect from the first, to wit, that of recalling to the mind of Peter the prediction of his master (see above, on v. 30.) That such oblivion is possible under strong excitement and temptation, must be known to thousands from their own experience, who will therefore need no refutation of the charge, that the narrative is untrue because "unpsychological." While Mark and Matthew (26, 75) both omit a striking and affecting circumstance preserved by Luke (22, 61), the first named uses an expression found in neither of the others, and the sense of which is much disputed, although no explanation is more probable than that given in the English Bible, *when he thought thereon*, literally, *casting (his mind) on (it.)* Examples of this usage have been found in several of the latter classics, such as Plutarch, Marcus Antoninus, Sextus Empiricus, and Galen. The other explanations which have been proposed, e. g. *rushing out, covering (his head), beginning, continuing, &c.* are all either contrary to usage or require too much to be supplied. The only one entitled to compete with that first given takes the verb in the same sense but supplies a different object, *casting (his eyes) on (him)*, i. e. looking at the Saviour as he passed, an act exactly corresponding to the one ascribed to Christ himself by Luke (22, 61), and represented as the immediate cause of his self-recollection and repentance. If this be philologically possible, it certainly presents a very beautiful antithesis between the statements of the two evangelists, the one relating how the Lord looked at Peter, and the other how Peter, looking at the Lord, wept bitterly.

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## CHAPTER XV.

HAVING traced the history of our Lord's prosecution to his condemnation by the Sanhedrim, and added as an episode the brief apostasy of Peter, Mark now proceeds to give the second part of this judicial process, namely, that which took place at the judgment-seat of Pilate, the Roman Procurator of Judea, before whom he avows his royal dig

nity, but gives no answer to the accusations of the Jewish rulers (1-5.) Seeing these accusations to be groundless, Pilate seeks to give him the advantage of a custom then prevailing, according to which some one prisoner was set free at the yearly festival; but the people, instigated by their rulers, demand the release of a notorious criminal, and the crucifixion of Jesus in his stead (6-14.) With culpable facility the governor, though anxious to deliver him, at length abandons the attempt, and allows them first to mock and then to crucify him (16-20.) Mark describes briefly, but with great distinctness, the procession for this purpose from the judgment-hall to Golgotha, the treatment which he there received, and various coincidences tending to identify him as the Messiah of the prophecies (21-32.) After six hours of preternatural darkness, and a dying cry which led to new derision on the part of his tormentors, he expires upon the cross, thereby opening a free access to God, denoted by the rending of the veil within the temple, and is acknowledged as the Son of God by the Roman officer who had charge of his execution, as well as by the women who came up with him from Galilee (33-41.) The completion of his great work, and the end of his prolonged humiliation, are indicated by a sudden change in the tone of the whole history, and the providential care with which his body is preserved from profanation and promiscuous burial, being entrusted to the care of a wealthy ruler who believed in him, laid in a new grave at or near the place of crucifixion, and watched through the Sabbath by those female followers, who seem to have filled the place of the apostles during their defection (42-47.) Of these events we have three accounts besides the one before us, that of Matthew (xxvii) most resembling it, while those of Luke (xxiii) and John (xviii. xix) are more distinct and independent, though substantially harmonious, and forming altogether a historical picture which has never been surpassed, and in which the lights and shades are blended with an effect beyond all human art and skill. The particular narrative of Mark, though vivid, has comparatively few of those minute strokes, which he elsewhere adds so often to the parallel accounts; a difference perhaps arising from the interruption of the recollections and impressions with which Peter had before supplied him.

1. And straightway in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried (him) away, and delivered (him) to Pilate.

Here begins the second part of our Lord's trial, that which took place before the Roman governor. *Immediately at (or towards) the dawn*, in Greek an adverb meaning *early*, early in the morning (see above on 1, 35. 11, 30. 13, 35), but here used as a noun, with the article prefixed, and governed by a preposition. The whole phrase means, as soon as it was day, without defining the precise time any further. *The chief priests* are spoken of throughout this whole transaction as

the leaders in it, which was the natural result of their position as the official representatives of the theocracy and the highest of the orders which composed the Sanhedrim. As the Greek word rendered *consultation* sometimes means a *council* (as in Acts 25, 12), the whole phrase (*making a council*) might be understood to denote the holding of a formal meeting; but the usage of the gospels is decidedly in favour of explaining it to mean the act of private consultation and deliberation, as to what step they should next take. (See above, on 3, 6, and compare Matt. 12, 14. 22, 15. 27, 7. 28, 12.) The priests consulted with the other members of the Sanhedrim, *the elders and scribes*, all three classes being comprehended in the phrase which follows (*and the whole Synedrion*), a formal and exact enumeration, of which we have already had repeated instances, all intended to evince the national and public character of the transaction. The necessity of further consultation at this stage of the proceedings arose from the fact that they had lost the power of inflicting capital punishments, as we learn, not only from John 18, 31, but from Josephus and the Talmud, which contains a traditional statement, that this power was taken from the Sanhedrim, about forty years before the downfall of Jerusalem. Although they had condemned the Saviour, therefore, it was not in their power to execute the sentence, without resorting to their foreign masters; and they might well regard it as a serious question how this should be done without undue concession on the one hand, or a failure to attain their purpose on the other. The result of their deliberation was, that they replaced the prisoner's bonds, which may have been removed during the trial, *and carried him away*, from the high priest's house, which was no doubt near the temple, to that of the Procurator on Mount Zion, *and delivered him*, gave him up, transferred him as a prisoner, *to Pilate*. After the eldest son of Herod the Great, Archelaus, (Matt. 2, 22), had been recalled and banished to Gaul by Augustus, Judea was annexed to the great Roman province of Syria, and governed by deputies called Procurators, the fourth of whom was Valerius Gratus and the fifth Pontius Pilatus, appointed in the thirteenth year of Tiberius, and already hated by the Jews for his extortions and severities (compare Luke 13, 1.) Like his predecessors and successors in that office, he resided commonly at Cesarea (compare Acts 23, 33. 25, 1. 4. 6. 13), but attended at Jerusalem during the great festivals, in order to preserve the peace, then specially endangered, and also it is said to exercise judicial functions, these times of extraordinary concourse being naturally chosen for that purpose. (See below, on v. 7.)

2. And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he, answering, said unto him, Thou sayest (it.)

Omitting the preliminary dialogue with Pilate, which was afterwards supplied by John (18, 29-31), and in which the governor refused to ratify and execute their sentence without knowing the charge and the evidence on which it rested, Mark proceeds at once to their compliance with this requisition, by appearing before Pilate, not as judges

but accusers of their own Messiah. Knowing well that the religious charge of blasphemy, on which they had themselves convicted him (13, 64), would not be entertained at that tribunal, they artfully accused him of claiming to be King of the Jews, and as such a competitor or rival of the Emperor (Luke 23, 2.) Pilate therefore asks him, *art thou the King of the Jews?* or as the words might be translated with a closer adherence to the form of the original, *thou art (then) King of the Jews?* which gives to the inquiry a slight tone of sarcasm, perfectly in keeping with what follows. The answer of our Lord, *thou sayest (it)*, interpreted according to its most obvious meaning and the idiom of other languages, might be regarded as an evasion or even a negation of the question, and is actually so explained by one of the Greek commentators, ‘*thou sayest (it), not I!*’ It is now agreed, however, that the idiom is a Hebrew one, of which traces have been found in later Jewish books, and which amount to a strong affirmation. That our Lord employed this very phrase, or its exact equivalent, may be inferred from its appearance in all four accounts. (Compare Matt. 27, 11. Luke 23, 3. John 18, 37.)

3. And the chief priests accused him of many things; but he answered nothing.

In addition to this general charge of claiming royal honours, or perhaps in mere specification of it, the chief priests, his official prosecutors, *accused him (of) many (things)*, or *much* (see above, on 1, 45. 3, 12. 5, 10. 23, 43. 9, 26), to which *he answered nothing*, as appears from Pilate’s question in the next verse. The positive statement of the fact here is peculiar to King James’s Bible, being found neither in the Greek text nor in any of the earlier English versions. The reasons of this silence were no doubt the same as when he stood before the Sanhedrim (see above, on 14, 60. 61); the frivolity of the charges, the certainty of condemnation, and his own unwillingness to be acquitted. The statement has reference only to the charges of the Jews, and is therefore perfectly consistent with John’s detailed report of a conversation between Christ and Pilate, as to the nature of his kingdom, by which the governor appears to have been satisfied that there was nothing in his claims adverse to the imperial prerogative or dangerous to the public peace. (See John 18, 34-38.) He was thus enabled to see through the flimsy pretext upon which the Jewish rulers claimed his interference for the punishment of Christ as a political offender, the only means by which they thought it possible to compass his destruction.

4. And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee.

But Pilate, although satisfied that these accusations were malicious and frivolous, could not understand our Lord’s refusal to give them a

direct and formal contradiction. He therefore expresses his surprise at this reserve, not only as injurious to the prisoner's own cause, but as making it less easy for the governor himself to discharge a prisoner, whom he fully believed to be innocent, but who obstinately refused to plead not guilty. This idea is suggested in the last clause of the verse before us, *see how many (and how great) things they testify against thee!* As if he had said, 'how can I dismiss such multiplied and formal charges, even though I think them groundless, if the accused party will not say they are so?' Thus understood, the questions here recorded are not merely curious, much less malignant, but intended to facilitate our Lord's acquittal.

### 5. But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

This surprise of Pilate was increased on finding, that the prisoner not only stood mute to the charges of the priests, but refused to give the governor a reason for his silence. The apparent harshness of this conduct with respect to Pilate, who undoubtedly at this time wished to set him free, is relieved by the consideration, that he ought to have done so on his own conviction, and that even the most formal contradiction on our Lord's part would not have prevented or delayed the fatal concession, by which Pilate ultimately sacrificed him to his enemies. As yet, however, he continues to pronounce him guiltless, and after an attempt to transfer him to Herod's jurisdiction (Luke 23, 5-12), still reiterates the same conviction (Luke 23, 13-15.) Passing over these particulars, preserved by Luke, Mark proceeds to describe Pilate's next expedient for the rescue of his prisoner.

### 6. Now at (that) feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

*At that feast he released* seems to be an anticipation of what afterwards occurred as to Barabbas; but the Greek words are expressive, not of an incident, but of an usage. *At that feast*, i. e. at the pass-over (John 18, 39), not only that year, but every year, or as the words might be translated, *feast by feast* (see above, on 13, 8. 14, 49), *he released* (i. e. as the imperfect tense implies, he was accustomed to release) *unto them* (for their benefit or satisfaction) *whomsoever they desired*, or requested as a favour to themselves, which is the true force of the middle voice (see above, on 6, 24. 25. 10, 38. 11, 24.) The origin of this strange practice is entirely unknown; but as no trace of it has been found in Jewish books, it was probably established by the Romans, as a means of popular conciliation, in the troublous times preceding the destruction of Jerusalem. The classical analogies which some adduce, the Greek *Thesmophoria* and the Roman *Lectisternia* are only partial, and throw little light upon the Jewish custom.

7. And there was (one) named Barabbas, (which lay) bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

There happened at this time to be a notable (or noted) prisoner (Matt. 27, 16), described by Mark and Luke (23, 19) as a rebel and a murderer, and by John (18, 40) as a robber, all which expressions seem to indicate him as a Zealot, one of those fanatical insurgents, whose excesses Josephus represents as growing more and more atrocious till the outbreak of the war, and as contributing in no small measure to the ultimate catastrophe (see above, on 3, 18, 11, 15.) The political complexion thus imparted to his crimes may account in part for the popular clamor in his favour. The last clause is plural, and refers to to his *fellow-rebels* (or *insurgents*.)

8. And the multitude, crying aloud, began to desire (him to do) as he had ever done unto them.

Instead of *crying out* (or *aloud*), several of the oldest manuscripts and versions have *ascending* (going up) i. e. to the Praetorium (see below, on v. 16.) *Began* (and continued) to desire (or rather to express desire by asking, as in v. 6.) *Him to do*, supplied by the translators, is no doubt the correct mode of completing the ellipsis. *As he always did to them* (or *for them*, as in v. 6) may perhaps imply that Pilate was himself the author of this questionable practice, though it does not necessarily exclude a reference to his predecessors also. Though the populace ( $\delta\circ\chi\lambda\oslash$ ) would no doubt have claimed their privilege in any case, they were probably prompted to demand it still more importunately by their rulers, with a view to the attainment of their own malignant purpose (see below, on v. 11.)

9. But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

From Mark's brief narrative it might appear, that Pilate merely caught at the demand of the people for a prisoner's release, as possibly affording him the means of rescuing our Lord, whose innocence of all political designs he not only saw but had repeatedly asserted (Luke 23, 4, 14.) But we learn from the more detailed account in Matthew (27, 17), that Pilate had assembled them and given them their choice between Barabbas and Jesus, erroneously but naturally thinking to secure the liberation of the latter by limiting the choice to him and to so infamous a convict. But he ought to have considered that the feeling of the Jews towards Christ (as described in the next verse) would have led them to prefer any other, however infamous, much more one whose resistance to the Roman power they may have secretly applauded as a zeal for God.

10. For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.

*For* introduces Pilate's reason for calling him *King of the Jews* (compare John 18, 29), to wit, because he knew that they had brought him to his bar and transferred him to the Roman jurisdiction, not because they thought him really an enemy to Cæsar, or, if they did so, would have valued him the less on that account, but because he was a formidable rival of their own, and if his claims were established, must at once destroy their influence and power as the chiefs of the theocracy, and as such representing the Messiah till he came, so that their selfish interest would prompt them to defer his advent to the latest moment. This is the *jealousy* or party-spirit, rather than personal *envy*, which the governor correctly saw to be the motive of their whole proceeding against Christ, and which he covertly suggested by demanding whether he should not release their king. This description involves likewise a contemptuous allusion to their charges of ambitious aspirations against one so harmless and, as he supposed, so powerless as the man before him. It must not be overlooked that the jealousy or envy here referred to was imputed by Pilate to the chief priests as the leaders in this persecution; while the proposition in the verse preceding is addressed to the multitude, as if in answer to their own demand for their accustomed privilege. It may be regarded therefore as a sort of appeal from the rulers to the people, as if he had said, 'You ask for a prisoner as usual; well, here is your King, whom your leaders have just brought before me; shall I set him free?'

11. But the chief priests moved the people that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

To counteract the governor's appeal to the people, which appeared to recognize Jesus as their King, and in that character proposed to set him free, the chief priests and elders (Matt. 27, 20) *moved* (agitated, instigated, stirred up) *the crowd* (or rabble) by persuasion (Matt. ib.) to demand, *that he should rather release* (discharge, set free) *Barabbas to them* (or *for them*, as in vs. 6. 8.) This deliberate preference of a bad man to a good one, of a justly condemned criminal to one whom even Pilate recognized as innocent, would have been enough to brand the conduct of the priests with infamy. But when to this we add that they preferred a murderer to the Lord of life, a rebel and a robber to a prophet, to their own Messiah, nay, to the incarnate Son of God himself, this perverseness seems almost incredible and altogether irreconcileable with rectitude of purpose and sincere conviction. For a masterly exposure of these aggravating circumstances in the conduct of the Jewish rulers compare Acts 3, 13-15, where Peter adds the very fact here mentioned, that they insisted on his death in opposition to the judgment and the wishes of a heathen magistrate.

12. And Pilate answered, and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do (unto him) whom ye call the King of the Jews?

The expression of their choice between the prisoners seems to have taken Pilate by surprise, and to have left him in doubt as to their wishes with respect to Jesus ; for he probably could not even yet believe, that they would go the whole length of their murderous intentions, and therefore asks them how this other prisoner shall be disposed of. As this was not within their jurisdiction, or in any way at their disposal, since their extradition of the prisoner to Pilate, he must be understood as asking, not for information, or in deference to their opinion or desire, but simply to express his own surprise at their extraordinary choice. As if he had said, ‘ Do you not perceive that by choosing the robber, murderer, and rebel, to be set free, you leave the other prisoner in custody ? and how do you expect him to be treated ? ’

### 13. And they cried out again, Crucify him !

*Again* does not mean that they had uttered this same cry before, but simply that they now uttered it in reply to Pilate’s question, in return to what they had just heard. We are now so accustomed to associate crucifixion with the death of Christ, that it may seem to us a matter of course that he should die in that way, rather than in any other. But as the proposition came from the Jews and not the Romans, although crucifixion was a Roman not a Jewish punishment, and although if he had been executed by the Jews themselves he would probably have died by lapidation (see above, on 12, 4), it becomes a question, why the multitude cried *crucify him*, rather than *behead him, stone him, or simply, put him to death*. That crucifixion was at once the most painful and disgraceful mode of capital punishment, was no doubt a reason for our Lord’s submitting to it as a part of his humiliation and atoning passion, but can scarcely have induced the Jews to clamor for it, as they here do, without some more proximate and palpable occasion. Such an occasion was afforded by the fact, that Pilate had just given them their choice between two prisoners, and they, in choosing one, had virtually put the other in his place ; and as Barabbas by the Roman law would no doubt have been crucified, they ask that Jesus may be treated likewise. Thus understood, the cry of the infatuated rabble, *Crucify him !* really means, deal with him as you would have dealt with Barabbas, and with Barabbas as you would have dealt with him, i. e. crucify the one and release the other. By causes seemingly so accidental was the great providential purpose realized, according to which Christ was to die an ignominious and agonizing death, yet one which should preserve the integrity of his body from mutilation or distortion, and at the same time bring about a literal fulfilment of the curse pronounced on every one who hangs upon a tree, (see Deut. 21, 23, and compare Gal. 3, 13,) the original reference in which is to the posthumous exposure of the body after stoning or beheading, by suspension in some public place, the only hanging practised under the law of Moses, while the terms of the malediction are so chosen as to be appropriate to crucifixion also, a remarkable example of the unexpected way in which the

prophecies are often verified. This was in fact one of the ends to be accomplished by the Saviour's transfer from the Jewish to the Roman power, as we learn from the remarkable expressions of a different evangelist (John 18, 32.)

14. Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him!

Pilate perceives too late the error, into which he had fallen, of allowing the people a specific choice between the prisoners, and of even seeming to refer the fate of him whom he considered innocent to their decision. But instead of stopping short at this point, he betrays his weakness and his want of principle by needlessly reopening the question, and demanding upon what ground they insisted on his execution. *Why*, in the original, is *for*, implying a negation (no, not so, *for what evil hath he done?*) Perceiving their advantage and his vacillation, the mob, as might have been expected, under the direction of their artful and malignant leaders, answered this question only by crying *more exceedingly* (or *out of measure*, as the same word or a kindred one is rendered in 10, 26 above), *crucify him*, i. e. 'carry out your own plan, stand to your agreement, execute your bargain; you have given us our choice and we have chosen Barabbas; now do your part and put Jesus in his place.'

15. And (so) Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged (him), to be crucified.

*Willing*, not in the attenuated modern sense of having no objection, but in the primary and strong sense of desiring, wishing. This distinction is important, as the word, correctly understood, implies that Pilate acted under the influence of other motives than such as grew directly out of this affair. That a Roman soldier and an arbitrary ruler should have yielded to mere clamour, in direct opposition to his own avowed convictions, is so highly improbable as not to be admissible, if any other explanation of his conduct can be even plausibly suggested. Such an explanation is perhaps afforded by the well known fact, attested by Josephus and contemporary classical historians, that the Jews were among the most unmanageable and refractory of all the conquered nations; that the Roman emperors attached an almost disproportionate importance to their being kept in due subjection, by a skilful combination of concession and coercion; that it had now become a constant practice for the people to complain at Rome of oppression and mal-administration; and that these complaints were treated with particular attention and sometimes followed by the most unfortunate results to those who had occasioned them. Besides the case of Archelaus, which has been already mentioned, we find two of

the later procurators, Felix and Festus, although men of very different character, attempting to conciliate the Jews, or as Luke expresses it, to *lay up favour* with them (i. e. against the day of reckoning at Rome), by unjust treatment of an eminent apostle (compare Acts 24, 27, 25, 9.) There is every reason to believe that Pilate shared the same anxiety, and therefore highly probable, that when he found the whole mass of the people thus united with their leaders in demanding this unrighteous sacrifice, it occurred to him that he had now an unexpected opportunity of gaining popularity, and possibly escaping ruin, by abandoning one whom he knew to be innocent indeed, but whose destruction would appear to such a man a small price to be paid for his own safety. If this view of the matter be correct, he was not merely *willing to content the people* in relation to this one affair, but positively wished to gain their favour, with respect to his own official conduct, and the influence which they might exert against him, when his functions ended. This supposition, while it serves in some measure to account for Pilate's otherwise inexplicable conduct, far from extenuating aggravates his guilt, by assigning a directly selfish motive for what might else have seemed the mere effect of weakness. *To content the people* is a Latin legal phrase (*satis facere*) translated into Greek ( $\tauὸν ἰκανὸν ποιῆσαι$ ), the converse or correlative of which occurs in Acts 17, 19. It is here not a technical but popular expression, corresponding to our own word *satisfy*, derived from the Latin one just mentioned. *The people*, here as throughout this narrative, is a Greek word meaning *crowd* or *rabble*, and employed to signify the tumultuary character of the proceeding, which was rendered national less by the popular participation than by that of the highest theocratical authorities. The extraordinary change in the feelings of the people, since their joyful recognition of our Lord as the Messiah (see above, on 11, 8–10), has been made the ground of sceptical objection, but admits of satisfactory solution from the following considerations. Even granting that the multitude on both occasions was substantially the same, which is a very large concession, when we take into account the vast numbers present at Jerusalem besides the ordinary population, we have no right or reason to regard it as exempt from that mobility of feeling and of conduct, to which the word *mob* owes its origin, and which is constantly exemplified throughout the world, in every time of more than usual excitement, and is commonly ascribed to the extraordinary force of human sympathy in large crowds, making them susceptible of influences which as individuals they would scarcely feel at all. This mere susceptibility, however, would account for nothing, unless the influence itself can be detected, as it may be here, in the concerted action of the theocratic rulers, which had never yet been brought to bear upon the people as it was in this case, all the previous opposition having been that of individuals and private combinations. It is not surprising that the masses, with their habits of religious veneration for the leaders of the church or nation, on finding that these leaders, as a body, looked on Christ as an impostor and blasphemer, should have suddenly renounced him as one who had deceived themselves. It may be asked,

however, why the rulers did not earlier avail themselves of this controlling influence, instead of constantly deferring the execution of their plans for fear of popular resistance. (See above, on 14, 2, and compare Luke 22, 6.) It is not to be denied that this requires explanation, and implies that something had occurred to make the people less disposed to such resistance, and to give the rulers influence or freer scope. This last solution is afforded by the obvious consideration, that the multitude who welcomed Christ as the Messiah were largely influenced by false views of the kingdom about to be established, and of the promised king himself, whom they regarded as a conqueror and secular monarch, by whom the Jews were to be rescued from their present vassalage, and raised to an equality, or rather a superiority, to other nations. Under the influence of such anticipations, and of our Saviour's miracles as proving him to be the Deliverer so long expected, many would be ready to espouse his cause and to acknowledge his pretensions, even in defiance of their theocratic rulers. But when these secular and carnal hopes were disappointed, by his unresisting seizure and arraignment, and his formal condemnation by the Sanhedrim as an impostor, there would naturally be a great revulsion in the public feeling towards him, which would no less naturally lay them open to the influence of unscrupulous and crafty agitators; and this, with the proverbial mobility belonging to all crowds, is abundantly sufficient to account for the alleged inconsistency, or rather to convert it into a decisive proof of authenticity and truthfulness. *Released Barabbas to them* (to the people), and delivered Jesus, virtually to them also, but formally to the Roman soldiers, who were to execute the sentence. *Having scourged him* (another word of Latin origin, see above, on 6, 27, 37, 12, 14.) This was a cruel and gratuitous addition to his sufferings, not peculiar to this case but belonging to the Roman practice. We learn from Luke (23, 16) that Pilate had before proposed this as a minor but sufficient punishment (too much for one whom he acknowledged to be innocent,) but which he now inflicts in addition to the greater, a further proof that his feeble movements of compassion had now yielded to his selfish fears.

16. And the soldiers led him away into the hall called Pretorium ; and they call together the whole band.

*The soldiers*, no doubt those composing Pilate's body guard and then on duty. *Led him away*, from the judgment-seat, probably erected in front of the house, not only to accommodate the scruples of the Jews (John 18, 28, 29), but also in compliance with a Roman custom. Josephus speaks of Florus, one of Pilate's successors, as erecting his tribunal in the very place here mentioned. *Into* (within, inside of) *the hall* (or open court, as in 14, 54, 66.) *Called Pretorium*, literally, *which is Pretorium*, the relative being of the neuter gender and therefore not agreeing with *hall*, which is feminine but with something not expressed, or, with the whole inside of the court, as being the official residence of Pilate. *Pretorium* is another of the many Latin words

occurring in this gospel, and originally means the tent of the Praetor or commander in an encampment, but was afterwards extended to the official residence of any Praetor or Proconsul, or other representative of Rome in provinces or conquered countries, as in Acts 23, 35 to the Procurator's residence in Cesarea, and here to the corresponding structure in Jerusalem, both of which were built by Herod the Great, the latter with great splendour on the northern brow of Zion overlooking the enclosure of the temple, and connected with it by a bridge, one arch of which is said to be still extant. In the court of this palace, the guards *call together the whole band*, cohort, maniple, the Greek word being used with great latitude, to designate larger and smaller divisions of the army, and here most probably employed in an indefinite or relative sense, to mean the whole corps to which they belonged, whether larger or smaller.

17. And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his (head).

In derision of our Lord's supposed pretensions to compete with earthly sovereigns, these rude warriors affect to clothe him in a royal dress and to pay him royal honours. *They clothe him in purple*, or as Matthew has it, *scarlet*, the Greek terms for colour being very indefinite, and frequently confounded even in the classics, that rendered *purple* being used especially to designate a great variety of shades from bright red to deep blue. But even if the word be taken in its modern fixed sense, there is no inconsistency between the statements, as the meaning evidently is, that they clothed him in mock-purple, or in something to represent a royal dress, most probably a red military cloak (Matt. 27, 28), which would answer their purpose as well as any thing more costly or of a real purple colour. *And they put around him* (i. e. around his head), *having woven (it), a thorny crown*. This is commonly explained as an act of wanton cruelty, the thorns being intended to pierce the brow as commonly exhibited in painting. Some interpreters suppose, however, that as nothing is said of any such effect, the crowning was intended, like the robing, merely for derision, and that the crown was made of thorns, because some plant of that kind happened to be near at hand, or because the thorns presented the appearance of some customary ornament about a crown. The use of some plant was the more natural because the first crowns were mere wreaths of leaves and flowers, such as those of palm and laurel, worn by the victors in the ancient games.

18. And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!

Having thus pretended to array him as a king, they now affect to pay him homage in the customary form. *Began to salute* (i. e. to hail or recognize him as a sovereign.) *Hail*, rejoice, be happy, the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew and Chaldee phrase, *Oh king live forever* (Dan. 6, 21.) *The king of the Jews*, the title which he had assumed,

and which these soldiers, like their commander, thought supremely ridiculous, as borne by such a person. It has been well observed that, as the Jews especially derided his prophetic claims (see above, on 14, 65), so the Romans mocked at his regal pretensions.

19. And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing (their) knees, worshipped him.

That this scene was not mere raillery or sport but cruel mocking, is apparent from the violence by which it is now followed. *They struck his head with a reed*, no doubt the same which Matthew (27, 29) represents as having been put into his hand as a mock-sceptre. With these rough soldiers the jesting tone is hard to be maintained, and soon relapses into bitter earnest or is mingled with it in incongruous confusion. Thus, after violating their own fiction, by striking the pretended king and spitting on him, they still bow the knee and worship him, or do him reverence as a real sovereign.

20. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

As this was only meant to be a passing show or momentary mockery, they soon grew weary of it, stripped him of the temporary purple, and replaced his own clothes as a necessary preparation for conducting him to execution ; but not till Pilate had exhibited him to the Jews without, as their pretended sovereign, and made another effort to deliver him, but on the false ground of his insignificance and incapacity to injure either Jews or Romans (John 19, 4-16.) *They lead him out*, i. e. out of the city, as appears to have been customary in all executions, being expressly spoken of in several cases, as in those of the blasphemer (Lev. 24, 14), of Naboth (1 Kings 21, 13), and of Stephen (Acts 7, 58.)

21. And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.

*They compel*, a Persian word adopted by the Greeks and originally signifying the impressment or compulsory employment of men, beasts, and conveyances by royal couriers in the Persian empire, secondarily applied to all forced assistance or compulsory employment of any kind or for any purpose (compare its use in Matt. 5, 41.) *A certain passer-by* (or *some one passing by*), which seems to imply that he was taken at random, without any special reason for selecting him, such as his being an African (from Cyrene on the north coast), or a slave, or a disciple. *From the field* does not necessarily mean from work there, but

agreeably to usage may mean *from the country* into town (see above, on 5, 14. 6, 56.) Mark describes him more particularly as *the father of Alexander and Rufus*, no doubt well known persons when he wrote, most probably among the Christians. The attempt to identify these persons with those named in Acts 13, 1. 19, 33. Rom. 16, 13. 1 Tim. 1, 20. 2 Tim. 4, 14 is entirely conjectural. *That he might bear his cross*, as malefactors usually did, and as John (19, 17) says that Jesus did in this case. There are two ways of reconciling this apparent contradiction; first, by supposing that our Lord did bear his cross until he reached the city-gate and then sunk under it, so that *going forth* (Matt. 27, 32) they compelled this stranger to relieve him; or secondly, by supposing that Simon only lightened the burden by carrying the part of the cross which was behind him (Luke 23, 26); either of which explanations is more natural than the supposition of a contradiction.

22. And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.

*Golgotha* is an Aramaic form of the Hebrew word for *skull*. The Latin version of the same word is *Calvarium*, from which comes *Calvary*, a word familiar to us by tradition, although not used in the English Bible. Some suppose it to have been so called from the skulls of those who had been executed there; but their exposure was contrary to Jewish usage and to ceremonial purity. Others suppose the skulls to have been buried; but why then should the place be called from them any more than from other portions of the skeleton? For these reasons, and because the word is singular, not plural, it is now the prevalent opinion, that the place was so named from its shape, as a protuberance or knoll, which will account for its traditional description as a mount or mound, but not a mountain or a lofty hill.

23. And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh; but he received (it) not.

They (the soldiers) gave him (i. e. offered to him, put into his hand or to his lips), *to drink*, for the purpose or in order that he might partake of it, *myrrhed wine* (spiced or medicated with myrrh), a mixture said to have been usually given to criminals before execution for the purpose of deadening their sensibility to pain. A precept somewhat similar is contained in the Talmud, apparently founded upon Prov. 31, 6. As the wine used by the soldiers was a cheap sour wine (called in Latin *posca*) little if at all superior to vinegar, and as myrrh, gall, and other bitter substances, are put for the whole class (see Deut. 29, 18. 32, 32. Jer. 8, 14. Lam. 3, 19. Amos 6, 12. Ps. 45, 8. Cant. 4, 6. 14), there is really no difference between this passage and the *vinegar mingled with gall* of Matt. 27, 34. It is equally unreasonable, therefore, to suppose two different potations with some harmonists, or to

allege a contradiction with some sceptics. Although in itself an act of mercy, yet as forming part of the whole murderous process, it was a literal fulfilment of the prophecy in Ps. 69, 21.

24. And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.

*And having crucified him*, i. e. nailed him to the cross, either before or after its erection, they *divide* (or *distribute*) his garments, which were allotted, as they often are in modern times, as a perquisite or fee, to the executioners. *Garments*, clothes, precisely as we use the latter word in English when we speak indefinitely, either of the whole dress, or of any given part, as in the more particular account of this transaction which has been preserved by John (19, 20.) This was another literal fulfilment of a prophecy (Ps. 22, 18), not in its full or highest sense, but so as to identify the person in whom even that sense was to be fulfilled. (See above, on 11, 2.)

25. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

*The third hour*, according to the Jewish reckoning, i. e. from sunrise, about nine o'clock of our time. But according to John (19, 14) it was already the sixth hour when Pilate made his last attempt to rescue him. This discrepancy is of course regarded by the sceptical interpreters as irreconcileable. But what can be intrinsically more improbable than such a contradiction, on a point so easily determined, and which must have been notorious to multitudes? And how can its escaping observation and remaining uncorrected be accounted for? The extreme improbability of these assumptions would suffice to justify us in concluding, that there must be some means of solution, even if we knew not what it is, or how to ascertain it. But besides this strong presumption against a contradiction, there are several methods of solution, each of which is less incredible than that hypothesis. The first is to refer the two specifications of time to different events or incidents, Mark's to the crucifixion, John's to the preparation, with which they are respectively connected in the narrative. The objection to this explanation is, that it leaves John's statement unexplained and unintelligible, as the preparation was a whole day (see below, on v. 42.) The second method of solution understands *hour* to be used by both evangelists for a division of the day (see above, on 6, 48. 13, 36), extending from the third to the sixth hour, the beginning of which is mentioned by one writer, and the end by the other. This, though admissible in case of exegetical necessity, ought not to be assumed without it, as no evidence exists of any such usage of the word *hour*, and the words do not naturally suggest this meaning. A third solution, much more probable than either of those previously mentioned, is that John, writing primarily for the churches of Asia Minor, uses the Roman mode of reckoning, i. e. from midnight, as he is thought by some

to do elsewhere (1, 39. 4, 6. 52.) The objection that this would make the crucifixion too early, is greatly weakened by considering, that our Lord was arrested in the evening, and condemned by the Sanhedrim at daybreak. The fourth solution rests upon the supposition of an early error in transcription, of which however there is no trace in the oldest copies extant. But as these are at least four centuries later than the date of composition, and as numbers may have been expressed in those still older by numerical letters, the signs for three and six, being very much alike, might easily be interchanged. What is most important here is not a peremptory choice between these different solutions, but a due appreciation of their probability, compared with the assumption of a direct contradiction, unobserved by friends or foes for ages.

26. And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

*The inscription of his crime (or accusation) was inscribed*, according to the Roman custom mentioned by Suetonius and other writers. Mark merely records the fact that the only charge against him was his being king of the Jews, a ground of condemnation so absurd, that the Jews themselves would never have assigned it. We find accordingly that it was written by the Roman governor (John 19, 19), no doubt as a sort of protest against such an execution, not so much on account of its injustice as of its absurdity. We also learn from the parallel accounts that it was written in three languages (Luke 23, 38), and placed above the sufferer's head (Matt. 27, 37), and that when the Jews desired it to be changed, the governor refused (John 19, 21. 22.)

27. And with him they crucify two thieves, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

*Two thieves*, or rather *robbers* (see above, on 11, 17. 14, 48), probably associates of Barabbas in his insurrection, and now left to suffer for it while their leader was released. Their being crucified with Christ was not necessarily intended as an indignity to him, but may have been in accordance with the usual practice of executing at the same time those who were condemned at the assizes held before or after the great festivals (see above, on v. 1.) *They crucify*, i. e. the soldiers charged by Pilate with the execution (see above, on vs. 15. 16.) *One from (his) right and one from his left (parts)*, a peculiar idiom equivalent in meaning to *right and left hand (or side)* in English (see above, on 10, 37. 40. 12, 36. 14, 62.)

28. And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.

This verse is omitted by the oldest manuscripts and latest critics, who suppose it to have found its way into the text from Luke 22, 37. Whether genuine or not, there can be no doubt that it indicates a real

fulfilment of the prophecy in Isaiah 53, 12, although not exhaustive of its meaning, as it includes other outward points in which the Saviour was confounded with transgressors, and in its highest sense teaches the great doctrine of his substitution and vicarious atonement for the sins of men.

29. And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest (it) in three days.

The cruel mocking of our Saviour is continued as he hangs upon the cross. *Those passing by*, not merely such as happened to be passing when the crucifixion took place, but also many who were present for the purpose, and who walked to and fro before him to express their spite and triumph in his dying agonies. *Blasphemed him*, both in the lower sense of railing or reviling, and in the higher sense determined by his being a divine person (see above, on 2, 7, 3, 28, 7, 22.) *Wagging* (literally *moving*) their heads, either laterally (shaking the head) as a gesture of negation, here implying a denial of his Messianic character, or vertically (nodding) as a gesture of assent to his condemnation as a just one; or more indefinitely, with some motion of the head expressive of malignant triumph (see Ps. 22, 7.) The particular taunt here recorded has respect to the specific charge on which he was arraigned before the Sanhedrin, and on which he would have been condemned but for a failure in the testimony (see above, on 14, 57-59.) *Ah*, in Greek *oua*, a sort of applauding acclamation (like *huzza* or *bravo*) used in the ancient games, and here applied ironically to our Lord, as one who had promised or threatened more than he was able to perform. *The (one) destroying* (throwing down, dismantling) *the temple* (i. e. who undertook to do so) *and in three days building* (it again.)

30. Save thyself, and come down from the cross.

The greatness of his undertakings is contrasted with his present helpless state. ‘If thou hast power to destroy and build the temple, thou must have power to save thy own life, and to come down from the cross where thou art hanging.’ This allusion to his own words, as misrepresented by the witnesses against him, seems to have been uttered by the common people, and is far less bitter and malignant than that expressed by their rulers, as recorded in the next verse.

31. Likewise also the chief priests mocking, said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save.

These cruel insults, far from being confined to the mere populace were carried furthest by the chief priests, scribes, and elders (Matt. 27, 41), collectively described by Luke (23, 35) as the rulers, thus imparting to these last acts of derision the same national and public character

which had been already ascribed to the judicial process and to the transactions before Pilate, and also implicating these representatives of Israel in the execution of our Lord, though outwardly performed by Roman soldiers. There is peculiar venom in the sarcasm uttered by these rulers, as it actually taunts him with his miracles of mercy, and without denying their reality, exults in the supposed loss of his saving power, just when it was needed for his own deliverance.

32. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.

This cruel taunt is followed by a no less cruel challenge to this false Messiah, this pretended king of Israel, to verify his claims by now descending from the cross, with an accompanying offer to acknowledge his pretensions, when established by this ocular demonstration. Besides the masses and the rulers, Mark and Matthew (27, 44) represent the robbers crucified with him as uniting in these blasphemous revilings, an act of desperate malignity which might appear incredible at such a moment, if analogous examples were not furnished in abundance by the scenes which still occur at executions, and sometimes at the death-beds of notorious sinners, whose blasphemy and malice are not always silenced even by the agonies of dissolution. Luke (23, 39-43) represents only one of these unhappy wretches as reviling Christ, and the other as reproofing his companion, and imploring mercy from the Saviour, who receives his prayer. The seeming inconsistency in these accounts may be removed by supposing, either that the plural form in Mark and Matthew is generic and descriptive of the class, like chief priests, scribes, and elders, without excluding individual exceptions; or that both did actually take part in the blasphemy, but one was suddenly arrested and converted, as a trophy of divine grace even in what might have seemed a desperate extremity. We are only concerned here with the apparent inconsistency; the details of Luke's narrative belong to the exposition of that gospel.

33. And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land, until the ninth hour.

As the moment of the Saviour's death approached, external nature displayed tokens, as it were, of sympathy with the great catastrophe. *The sixth hour coming* (or becoming, happening, arriving), when he had already hung upon the cross three hours (see above, on v. 25), *there was darkness*, literally, *darkness happened* (or began), another form of the same verb that is used in the preceding clause. *Was over* (or *came upon*) *the whole land* (of Israel), or *the whole earth*, the Greek word bearing both translations. As the latter, however, is itself restricted by the fact that it was dark already over one half of the globe, there is the less objection to the common version, which confines the darkness to the Holy Land, as the appointed scene of these sublime

events, and accounts for the silence of contemporary history in reference to this darkness. Though the sun was obscured (Luke 23, 45), it was not a natural eclipse, which is excluded by the full moon preceding and determining the Passover. Nor would the mere concurrence of a natural eclipse, however striking, have been so significant at this great crisis, as an extraordinary obscuration, specially ordained for this particular occasion. It was not, however, a mere transient shadow or deliquium of daylight, but a darkness of three hours, from the sixth to the ninth of the Jewish day, i. e. from noon to three o'clock of our reckoning, being half the time of the Redeemer's actual suspension and exposure on the cross. This unearthly gloom immediately preceded his last words and actions after a protracted silence.

34. And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

At the close of this long interval of darkness and silence, during which we may suppose the taunts and sneers of those standing by to have been hushed in terror and suspense, Jesus speaks again, and with a loud voice, uttering the first words of the twenty-second Psalm, *My God, my God, why didst thou forsake (abandon, leave) me?* These words are given, no doubt as he uttered them, in Hebrew, with the single substitution of one Aramaic synonyme (*sabachthani* for *azabthani*), followed by the Septuagint version, not as having been uttered at the same time, but as added for the benefit of Gentile readers. Some regard this repetition of the first words of the psalm as an intimation that the whole prophecy which it contains had been or was about to be fulfilled in him. The more usual and obvious opinion is, that he selected this particular expression, not because it was the first, or to represent the rest, but because it was designedly descriptive of the trial through which he had just passed, as a state of actual desertion by the Father, in which lay the essence or the height of his vicarious passion, and compared with which his mere corporeal agonies were nothing. Some infer from this use of the psalm in question, that it is a formal and exclusive prophecy of this event, and that all its language has respect to it directly. Others explain the psalm as having primary reference to David and his enemies, but as types of Christ and those who caused his death. A third hypothesis divides the psalm mechanically, as it were, between these two great themes, assigning certain parts to each, without propounding any principle or rule of distribution. A fourth view of the matter understands the psalm as a generic prophecy, describing what the righteous as a class, or an ideal person representing them, must suffer at the hands of sinners, and supposes the description to have had its highest and most striking although not its sole fulfilment in the sufferings of Christ. Common to all these exegetical hypotheses is the assumption of an original intentional reference to him,

and not a mere accommodation or perversion of the language to another subject, as asserted by the sceptical interpreters.

35. And some of them that stood by, when they heard (it), said, Behold, he calleth Elias.

The allusion here is to the obvious resemblance of the name *Elijah*, both in its Greek and Hebrew form, to the word which means *my God* in the quotation from the twenty-second psalm. This resemblance is still stronger, or more marked, in Matthew's orthography (*Eli*) than in Mark's (*Eloi*), though sufficiently perceptible in either to explain the speaker's meaning and intention. Some regard this as a serious mistake upon the part of those who stood by, and who are then to be regarded as really believing that the Saviour had invoked Elijah. But this is not a natural or probable error in a Jew, who must have understood the words, unless we assume that they were indistinctly uttered, which is not only a gratuitous assumption, but apparently at variance with the statement that he cried with a loud voice, implying, in such a case as this, articulate intelligible utterance. Even the Hellenistic Jews, to whom some have imputed the mistake, were as familiar with the Hebrew text as modern Jews in Europe or America. To the supposition that the persons meant were Roman soldiers, there is a different but no less obvious objection, namely, that they would know nothing of Elijah; or if this be too much to assume in reference to those who had been many years in Palestine, it may at least be said that even such would scarcely think of Elijah in the circumstances here described, and also that the same familiarity with Jewish history and doctrines, that would make the prophet's name familiar, would prevent its being thus confounded with another well known formula. On these grounds, or on others, most interpreters are now agreed, that this was not an actual error, but a bitter irony or sarcasm, which affected to mistake the meaning, and involved at the same time an allusion to the prophecy of Malachi (4, 5), that Elijah should return before the coming of Messiah. (See above, on 9, 11-13.)

36. And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put (it) on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.

The action here described had no connection with our Saviour's cry, or with the false sense put upon it by the lookers on, but was occasioned by his saying, *I thirst* (John 19, 28.) The one who ran was no doubt one of the Roman guard by whom he had been crucified, and the vinegar administered the sour wine provided for the soldiers (see above, on v. 23, and compare John 19, 29.) This however was not drugged or spiced with gall or myrrh, like that which he refused before (v. 24), because unwilling to mitigate his sufferings or deaden his own

sense of them. That which he now received was merely sour wine, or wine and water, or perhaps what is properly called vinegar, still used as a beverage in modern as it was in ancient times (Ruth 2, 14.) The reason of our Lord's complaint and draught, and their connection with the completion of his sacrifice, belong to the exposition of John's gospel. The circumstance is mentioned here by Mark, in order to complete the cruel jest about Elias. When in compliance with his own request, one of the soldiers filled a sponge with vinegar and placed it on a reed or stalk of hyssop (John 19, 29) and approached it to his mouth, the heartless mockers, far from being moved by this last sign of life, called to the soldier, *let alone* (desist, or wait), *let us see if Elias comes to take him down*. As if they had said, 'why allay his thirst when his forerunner is approaching to deliver and provide for him?' To this absurd as well as wicked jest, the man appears to have responded, in the very act of giving him the vinegar, a circumstance recorded here by Mark, while Matthew (27, 49) gives the language of the others, a variety which none but a sceptical interpreter can look upon as contradiction.

37. And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

*Emitting a great voice*, not a mere cry but an articulate intelligible utterance, the words of which have been preserved by John (19, 50) and Luke (23, 46), while neither Mark nor Matthew records any of our Lord's last sayings, after the citation from the twenty-second psalm. The accounts, however, are entirely consistent, and combined afford a series of dying words, succeeding one another with a natural and perfectly harmonious connection. *Gave up the ghost* is not, as the English reader might imagine, an exact translation of some strange Greek phrase, but a native idiom of our own, corresponding to a single Greek word, meaning *breathed out* or *expired*, a beautiful substitute for *died*, which all the evangelists appear to have avoided, perhaps in order to suggest more strongly the idea, that our Lord's death was an act of his own will, as predicted by himself (John 10, 18), and distinctly although variously recorded here in all the gospels. (Compare Matt. 27, 50. Luke 23, 46. John 19, 30.)

38. And the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom.

The restrictive institutions of the old dispensation being temporary in design and preparatory to the new, the completion of the great work of atonement was attended by a symbolical announcement, that the barriers erected in the ceremonial law were now cast down, and free access allowed into the presence of Jehovah. The event which symbolized this great change was the rending of the veil or hanging, which divided the Holy Place from the Most Holy, or the outer from the inner sanctuary. As the whole sanctuary, both in its moveable and standing

form, set forth the doctrine of divine habitation, so its innermost apartment represented the most intimate approach to God and communion with him, and the rending of the veil which closed the entrance symbolized the removal of all hindrances to such communion, now effected by the sacrificial death of Christ. The demand of the German sceptics how this rending could be known to any but the priests, is only equalled by the answer of the German believers that, as many priests were afterwards converted (Acts 6, 7), it became generally known through them. The rending is described with great particularity by Mark and Matthew (27, 51) as being into two parts, and from top to bottom, whereas Luke (23, 45) simply says that it was rent in the midst (or through the middle.) Compare the allusions to this veil in the epistle to the Hebrews (6, 19. 9, 3. 10, 20.)

39. And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

This verse describes the effect of Christ's death and the accompanying circumstances on the Roman officer who had been charged with the execution. *The centurion*, a Latin word denoting the commander of a hundred men, but used with some degree of latitude to designate the subordinate officers of a Roman legion. It is worthy of remark that while Matthew and Luke often use this title, and invariably in the form of a Greek translation or equivalent, Mark in this chapter three times has the Latin word itself, in strict accordance with his Latinisms elsewhere. Points of difference, so slight and unimportant in themselves, are, for that very reason, the more likely to be genuine, or to proceed from the original writer, and evince not only the integrity and unity of each composition, but its author's individuality of thought and language, unaffected by his inspiration. *The centurion, the (one) standing by, over against him* (or in front of him), observing the whole process of his crucifixion, *seeing that so having cried he expired*. Some of the modern writers try to make this the ground of the centurion's confession, namely, that the dying man could cry with so loud a voice; whereas the meaning evidently is, when all was over, when this last cry had been uttered, then the centurion said what is here recorded. *Truly*, no doubt, certainly, *this man*, thus shamefully put to death as an impostor, was innocent of that charge (Luke 23, 47), and was really the Son of God, as he pretended. As the article is wanting before both nouns, some translate the phrase, *a son of a God*, and explain it as a heathenish expression, but on that account the more appropriate in the mouth of a Roman soldier who knew nothing of the true religion. This may be admitted, as to the mere form of the expression; but it cannot be supposed that any Roman, of the rank of a centurion, even if he had been in the country only a few days, much less if he had spent some years there, could be so wholly ignorant of Christ's pretensions, and of the sense in which he claimed to be the Son of God, as to attach no other meaning to the words than that suggested by his

own mythology. He no doubt spoke in Latin, which has no more definite expression than *Filius Dei*, the language having no such part of speech as the definite article.

40. 41. There were also women looking on afar off, among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less, and of Joses and Salome ; who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him ; and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

Besides the Roman soldiers, whose orders required them to witness the whole process of the crucifixion, it was also witnessed by a very different class, and from very different motives, those of personal interest and strong affection. From the special mention of these two classes or spectators of the tragedy, it is not improbable that they alone were present during the whole time, the remaining multitude, though vastly numerous, continually fluctuating, as in all such cases, where the show, whatever it may be, is prolonged through many hours. But who were they whose personal attachment to the sufferer kept them thus in sight, though at a distance, of his agonies ? Not the apostles, whom he had selected to be with him, and by whom his kingdom was to be erected. With a single exception (John 19, 26), they appear to have been still dispersed, and at a distance from the scene of sorrow ; but their place was providentially supplied by a number of female friends and disciples, who had come up with our Lord from Galilee, and who had previously contributed, both by their possessions and their personal attentions, to his maintenance and comfort. Not only Mark and Matthew here (27, 55), but Luke at an earlier period of the history (8, 1-3), expressly speak of these devoted women as *many*, although only few are named ; so that this honourable duty of providing for our Saviour's wants was not monopolized by any narrow clique or circle, but divided, as it were, among the body of his female followers. *Mary Magdalene*, or Mary of Magdala, now Mijdal, on the west coast of the Sea of Galilee, on whom our Lord had wrought a signal miracle of dispossession (Luke 8, 2), of itself sufficient to account for her devotion, though it sprang no doubt from a still higher source of spiritual gratitude. Tradition has confounded or identified this woman with the nameless "sinner" in Luke 7, 37, and thus made the local name of *Magdalen* descriptive of repentant harlots, an assumption perfectly gratuitous and possibly calumnious of this devoted Christian. For although no depth of degradation is beyond the reach of Christ's compassions and almighty grace, we have no right to exalt even these by assuming a degree of degradation which may never have existed in the case supposed. Or even granting the tradition to be credible and ancient, we should carefully distinguish between any mere tradition and authentic history. *Mary the mother of James and Joses*, mentioned above, in 6, 3, with two others, as the brethren of our Lord, i. e. most probably

his cousins and the sons of Clopas or Alphaeus by this Mary, who is commonly regarded as the sister of our Lord's own mother, notwithstanding the identity of name, but by some as the sister of Joseph. *James the less*, literally, *the little*, either in stature (like Zaccheus, Luke 19, 3), or in age, to both which the Greek word is applied in usage. Although positive in form, it is probably a relative expression, and intended to distinguish one James from another, i. e. according to the prevalent opinion, James the Son of Alphæus from the older, larger, or more eminent apostle of the same name. Instead of *Salome*, Matthew has *the mother of the sons of Zebedee*, whose name is therefore commonly supposed to be Salome. But this inference, though probable, is not absolutely certain, as the two evangelists may not have named precisely the same three out of the *many* Galilean women whom they both describe as present at the crucifixion.

42, 43. And now, when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

There is nothing in this history more striking than the sudden change, not only in the narrative, but in the incidents themselves, as soon as the great work of expiation is accomplished. As before this every thing was providentially so ordered as to aggravate and almost to exaggerate our Lord's humiliation, so now the same extraordinary providence is visible, protecting his remains from profanation, and securing them an honourable burial, preparatory to his resurrection. The insults of the soldiers and the rabble and the rulers are now followed by the tenderest attentions of refined and tender friendship; the scourge, the buffet, and the spittle, by delicate perfumes and spices; the mock-robe and thorny crown by pure white linen and a tomb where no corpse had ever rested. The special divine interposition with respect to our Lord's burial must not be overlooked. The Roman custom was to let the bodies rot upon the cross and be devoured by birds; but when this form of punishment was introduced among the Jews, their law would not admit of this exposure (Deut. 21, 23), and it became usual to expedite the death of those thus executed, so as to admit of their burial the same night in a promiscuous receptacle or common grave. There was therefore every human probability, that Christ's limbs would be broken to abbreviate his life, and his body buried with the other convicts, and especially with those who suffered at the same time, both which events would have seriously interfered with the design and the effect of his resuscitation. But the first was prevented by his early death, the more remarkable because the death by crucifixion was among the most lingering and painful possible, the frame being suspended by sensitive but not vital parts, and life destroyed, not merely by the wounds, but by the joint effect of hunger, thirst, expo-

sure, cramps and spasms. The other profanation was prevented by an unexpected movement on the part of a distinguished person, who has hitherto been out of view, though not inactive. This was *Joseph of* (or rather *from*, i. e. originally from) *Arimathea*, described by Luke (23, 51) as a city of the Jews, and identified by some geographers with the Ramah or Ramathaim of 1 Sam. 1, 1, but by Eusebius and Jerome with an Armatha near Lydda, called Ramathem in Maccabees and Ramatha by Josephus. This man was a counsellor or senator, not a local magistrate of Arimathea, but a member of the Sanhedrim, who had taken no part in the process against Jesus (Luke 23, 51), but *himself also waited for the kingdom of God*, i. e. expected the Messiah's advent (see above, on 1, 15.) The word translated *honourable* has respect originally to the personal appearance and means *handsome, comely*, as in 1 Cor. 7, 35. 12, 24, but is then transferred to character and social position, corresponding very nearly to *respectable* in English. This man, who had hitherto been a concealed disciple through fear of the Jews, now comes forward, when it was least to be expected, musters courage to go into Pilate's presence, and asks, as a gift or a favour to himself, the body of Jesus.

44. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead ; and calling (unto him) the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

Pilate expresses no surprise at the request, nor any hesitation in acceding to it, a result no doubt secured by the character and rank of the petitioner. He only wonders at the early death, and even doubts if it be possible ; but having learned from the centurion, who had charge of the execution, that he had been dead some time, *he gave the body to Joseph*, not delivered or transferred it merely, but, as the Greek word properly denotes, made him a present of it, no doubt in allusion to the frequent practice, probably well known to Pilate's own experience, of receiving money from the friends of executed criminals, to spare them the dishonour of exposure or promiscuous burial.

45, 46. And when he knew (it) of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

Besides the facts which Mark here mentions, that the body was taken from the cross, wrapped in linen, and laid in a tomb hewn in the rock, no doubt a lateral excavation, and a stone rolled against the opening ; we learn from Matthew (27, 60) that the tomb was Joseph's own, which he had recently prepared ; from Luke (23, 53) that it had never yet been used ; and from John (19, 41) that it was in a garden, at or near the place of crucifixion. Both Mark (v. 42) and John (19,

42) mention, that it was the *preparation*, that is, immediately before the sabbath, which began at sunset, so that a speedy burial was necessary to avoid a violation of the law; and therefore, as this tomb was near at hand, the body was immediately conveyed there, these apparent accidents contributing not only to its preservation from dishonour but to the fulfilment of two prophecies, the one that his bones should not be broken (Ps. 34, 20), and the other, that though joined with the wicked in his death, he should be buried with the rich or noble (Isai. 53, 9.)

#### 47. And Mary Magdalene and Mary (the mother) of Joses beheld where he was laid.

The last fact which Mark here mentions is that two of the women named in v. 40, both called Mary, were spectators of Christ's burial, as well as of his death, observing where he was deposited, to which Matthew (27, 61) adds, that they sat down before the tomb, and Luke (23, 56) that they afterwards procured spices, to be used upon the body of their master, after the sabbath which they religiously observed.



### CHAPTER XVI.

THE remaining topics are the Resurrection and Ascension, with the intermediate appearances of Christ to his disciples and his commission to the twelve apostles. The confusion which confessedly exists in this part of the gospel narrative, and the consequent difficulty of reducing it to one continuous account, is not the fault of the historians, but the natural effect of the events themselves, as impressed upon the senses and the memory of different witnesses. If it had pleased God to inspire a single writer as the historian of the resurrection, he would no doubt have furnished as coherent and perspicuous a narrative as any other in the sacred volume. But since it entered into the divine plan, as a necessary element, to set before us not a single but a fourfold picture of our Saviour's life and death, we must purchase the advantage of this varied exhibition, by submitting to its incidental inconveniences, among which is the difficulty, just referred to, of combining all these views, taken from different points of observation, into one complete view to be seen at the same moment. The historical problem is as hard to solve as the pictorial, not more so, and the seeming inconsistencies, resulting from the effort to amalgamate the narratives, ought no more to destroy our faith in their eventual harmony, than similar points of disagreement, in four photographic views of the same edifice or landscape, ought to make us question either the identity of the object or the absolute truth of the delineation. A large part of the difficulty, practi-

cally felt as to the gospels, has arisen from the error of attempting the impossible, to wit, the resolution of four landscapes into one, and the effort to improve upon God's method of exhibiting this part of saving truth, instead of thankfully resting in the apostolic dictum, that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men" (1 Cor. 1, 25.) The extent to which these harmonistic methods have been carried, has produced a natural though not a rational reaction towards the opposite extreme of denying all consistency and unity in these inspired variations of a single theme, and converting even incidental proofs of oneness into pretended proofs of contradiction. Between these extremes of error, as in multitudes of other cases, there is happily a middle course of truth and moderation, which, refusing to reject the tokens either of essential harmony or unessential variation, endeavours to account for every seeming inconsistency, and yet to leave each narrative in undisturbed possession of its characteristic and designed peculiarities. These views, which have already been presented in their substance and applied to the whole history, are here repeated as peculiarly appropriate to this concluding portion, in which the variations are more numerous and striking than in any other passage of the same length, and in which the opposite extremes of sceptical and harmonistic method are presented in the most revolting contrast. While apparent contradictions between Mark's brief narrative and those of Matthew, Luke, and John, may be readily removed by fair comparison and natural hypotheses, such as all involuntarily assume in weighing evidence relating to the commonplace affairs of life, it is still more important to detect, if possible, the grounds on which he has selected and arranged his facts, as furnishing a key to their correct interpretation and appreciation. Such a key is afforded by the simple suggestion, that in this account of the Saviour's resurrection and subsequent appearances, a specific purpose of the writer is to point out the successive steps, by which the incredulity of the apostles was at length subdued, and their minds prepared for the reception and the execution of their great commission. These successive steps or stages are: his message by the company of women (1-8); that by Mary Magdalene (9-11); that by the two disciples journeying to Emtnaus (12-13); his final appearance to the apostolic body (14); followed by the great commission (15-18), the ascension (19), and the execution of these farewell orders (20.) The reader will do well to bear in mind the close concatenation of these topics, when he comes to the question with respect to the genuineness of the last twelve verses (see below, on v. 9.)

1. And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the (mother) of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

In execution of the purpose just ascribed to the evangelist, he describes the first intimation of our Saviour's resurrection which reached the apostles. This consisted of a declaration made by an angel to three women at the sepulchre, and a message sent through them to the

eleven (1-8.) *The sabbath being past* (or more exactly, *through*) implies what is expressly said by Luke (23, 56), that notwithstanding their desire to pay the last permitted honours to the body of their Lord, "they rested the sabbath-day according to the commandment." The women named are those who had been previously mentioned (15, 40) as spectators of the crucifixion, and two of them again (15, 47) as witnessing his burial. Though only the two Maries are here named by Matthew (28, 1), and only one of them by John (20, 1), and none of them by Luke (24, 1), who merely continues what he had been saying of the Galilean women (23, 56), and adds *some* (or *certain*) *with them*; it is evident that all this is nothing more than a striking instance of harmonious variation, the accounts differing only in minuteness and precision. The essential fact, which Mark here brings out, is that the first intimation of Christ's being risen was made to women at the sepulchre. After naming the three leaders or most active members of the company, he states their errand or the object of their early visit. *They brought spices* (in Greek, *aromata*), when is not here said, although the obvious construction of the sentence is that they did so after the sabbath was past, and as this came to an end at sunset, they might easily have done so afterwards, so as to have them ready for use early the next morning. The statement of Luke (23, 56) is equally indefinite as to the precise time of these purchases, which might be mentioned before their observance of the sabbath, though it took place after it. The representation of the two accounts as contradictory is not only groundless but unfair, and as such to be rejected. *That they might anoint him* is usually understood of embalming for the preservation of the body, which would imply the absence of all hope as to his resurrection. But as embalming in the proper sense was not a Jewish practice (as to John 19, 40, see above, on 14, 8), and was the work rather of physicians than of women (compare Gen. 50, 2), and as the aromatic substances here mentioned were suited only for external application, it is on the whole most probable that they intended merely to express affection and respect by outward unction, just as another Mary had done during her Lord's lifetime (14, 8.).

2. And very early in the morning, the first (day) of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

The precise time of their coming for this purpose is described by Mark as *very early on the first day of the week*, which agrees with the parallel accounts, even the added words, *at the rising of the sun* (literally, *the sun having risen*), being really no more at variance with the others than with Mark's own words; and he surely cannot be supposed to contradict himself. The expressions may be fully reconciled, either by referring them to different arrivals, not distinctly mentioned, or from the usage known to various languages, which takes dawn and sunrise indefinitely, as descriptive of the same time, namely, early morn-

ing, and of which examples have been cited from Judges 9, 33. Ps. 104, 22, and the Septuagint version of 2 Sam. 23, 4. 2 Kings 3, 22.

3. 4. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away; for it was very great.

The evangelist relates the conversation of the women on their way to the sepulchre of Christ, when they seem to have considered, for the first time, how they should gain access to the tomb, which was secured by a great stone or rock, placed against or in the entrance of the excavation (see above, on 15, 46.) But on arriving at the spot, they find the obstruction already removed. *When they looked*, literally, *looking up*, implying that their eyes before were downcast (compare Luke 24, 5) and their thoughts absorbed in the subject of their conversation. *They behold* (with surprise) *that the stone has been rolled away*, the present tense describing the whole scene as actually passing. The concluding words (*for it was great exceedingly*) have reference, not to what immediately precedes, but to their anxious thoughts and consultations. This connection is made clear by a parenthesis in most editions; but the original construction is what the Greek grammarians called a *hysteron proteron*, or grammatical inversion, when the writer goes back and supplies a word or clause omitted in its proper place. As if he had said, ‘they asked who would roll the stone away, and when they came found it rolled away already, which was a sensible relief, for it was very large.’

5. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

From what is here said it is clear that Joseph’s sepulchre was not a mere grave, but a spacious vault or excavation, such as men provided for themselves and for their families (compare Isai. 22, 16), and of which there are specimens still extant in the rocks about Jerusalem. *A young man*, in Greek a single word meaning *youth*, here described as he appeared to the women, but by Matthew (28, 1. 5) as an angel of the Lord, who had descended from heaven, rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. There is something puerile in the attempt to represent this as a contradiction, since it is not necessarily implied that he remained in that position, nor in Mark’s account that he was inside of the sepulchre, but only that the women, as they went in, saw him sitting on the right hand, perhaps at the entrance, and upon the stone which he had just removed. The difference in relation to the number of the angels is the same as in the case of the demoniacs of Gadara (see above, on 5, 2), and of the blind men healed at Jericho (see above, on 10, 46), except that Matthew here records but one, and the plurality

belongs to Luke (23, 4), which does not favour the idea, entertained by some, that Matthew naturally saw things double, or combined them into pairs. It was sufficient for Mark's purpose to describe the angel who addressed the women, and thus took the leading part in this transaction. *Clothed*, literally, *cast about*, enveloped, wrapped, the same verb and the same construction as in 14, 51. *White*, denoting not mere colour but a supernatural effulgence, as in 9, 3. *Affrighted*, both astonished and alarmed, the same verb that is used above, in 9, 15. 14, 33, and a strengthened form of that in 1, 27. 10, 24. 32. It here expresses not mere fright, but that peculiar awe which may be supposed to spring from the sight of a superior being.

6. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted ; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified ; he is risen ; he is not here ; behold the place where they laid him.

The language of the angel is encouraging and re-assuring ; he anticipates their anxious inquiries for the Saviour, and informs them of his resurrection. *Jesus the Nazarene, the crucified*, is not a mere description of the person, but a pointed allusion to his extreme humiliation, summed up in the name *Nazarene* (Matt. 2, 23), and terminating in his crucifixion. ‘ You are looking for the body of that scorned and persecuted Galilean, whom the Jews so lately put to an ignominious and painful death ; but you are come too late, he is no longer here ; he has awaked from the sleep in which you thought him sunk forever ; so that now you can find nothing but the spot which he occupied during his brief death and burial.’ Gracious and soothing as these words are, they are not without a slight tone of reproach, that those who loved the Son of Man so well, and had attended so long on his teaching, should look upon his case as one of natural mortality, and come to honour his remains, but not to witness his resuscitation.

7. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee ; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

It was not for the relief and consolation of these pious women only or chiefly, that the messenger from heaven spoke, but through them to the body of Apostles, or disciples in the strictest sense, and especially to Peter, who, notwithstanding his denial of his master, was to be restored, not only to his place as an apostle, which indeed he had not lost, but to his old precedence as the representative and spokesman of his brethren. (Compare John 21, 15-17. Acts 1, 15. 2, 14. 38. 3, 6, 12. 4, 8. 5, 3. 8. 29.) *Go your way*, in modern English *go away*, in Greek a single word, *depart*, begone, implying that they had no time to lose and that their presence was required elsewhere. Having, as it were, supplied the place of the apostles during their defection (see above, on 15, 40. 47), these devoted women are now commissioned to

recall them to their duty, by reminding them of an appointment made by Christ before he suffered (see above, on 14, 28), but which they had forgotten in the sorrow and confusion caused by the literal fulfilment of those prophecies respecting his own death which they had probably regarded as mere parables. The confusion of mind thus produced appears to have prevented their perceiving or remembering, that the same predictions had foretold his resurrection, which had now come to pass accordingly, and of which the angel here directs the woman to inform them, not directly, but by saying that the Lord was ready to fulfil his pledge, by going before them into Galilee. This might seem to mean that he would actually go there as of old at their head, and as their literal leader; but we learn from John (21, 1-14), and Matthew (28, 16-18), that he joined them after their arrival, and may therefore take the words before us in the equally legitimate sense, that he would be in Galilee before them, i. e. they would find or meet him there, on their return home from the passover. *There shall ye see him, as he said to you,* referring to the promise and appointment made on his way from the upper chamber in Jerusalem to the garden of Gethsemane (see above, on 14, 28.)

8. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled, and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any (man), for they were afraid.

*Going out they* (not merely walked, or even ran, but) *fled from the sepulchre.* The next words do not formally assign a reason for their flight, but continue the description, *and (not for) tremor and ecstasy* (trembling and amazement, see above, on 5, 42). *had* (held or possessed) *them.* Taken by itself, the last clause of this verse would seem to mean that the women, in their terror and confusion, did not deliver the angelic message to the eleven. But as the natural effect of their alarm would be the opposite of this; as it is not easy to see what they had to fear from making the communication; and as Matthew speaks expressly twice (28, 10. 11) of their going to report to the disciples; all ordinary laws of language and of evidence not only suffer but require us to understand the clause as an additional description of their haste and agitation, *trembling and amazement seized them, and to no one they said nothing, for they were afraid,* not afraid to speak, but so alarmed at the vision and the words of the angel, that they did not stop to speak to any one, but hurried to convey his message. As Mark is not relating all these movements in detail, but simply enumerating the successive intimations made to the eleven of their Master's resurrection, he proceeds no further with the first, but passes to the second in the next verse.

9. Now when (Jesus) was risen early, the first (day) of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

Although Mary Magdalene was one of the three women named by three of the evangelists, as coming early to anoint the body of the Lord, two of them afterwards appear to separate her from the rest and introduce her alone in a part of the ensuing transactions. This is understood, by some of the best modern writers, as implying that, although she came with the other women to the tomb, she remained behind when they had fled, pursuing her inquiries for the body of her Lord, and was consequently honoured with a second vision of angels and a sight of Christ himself. This is related in detail by John (20, 11–18), and very compendiously by Mark, who reckons this his first appearance, either absolutely or in reference to his own selection and arrangement of the facts. This verse assigns a reason for Mary Magdalene's devotion to the Saviour, and perhaps for the honour put upon her by this special appearance to herself alone. There is then no ground for the assertion, that she is introduced here as a personage who had not been previously mentioned, which has been used to corroborate the fashionable modern notion, that this and the following verses are a spurious addition to the gospel by a later hand. The external evidence relied upon is the omission of the passage in the Vatican manuscript, and some indications of doubt as to its genuineness in several other ancient critical authorities. In support of the foregone conclusion thus reached, German ingenuity has not failed to detect internal indications of a different writer, such as the absence of Mark's favourite expressions, and the use of several not found elsewhere in his Gospel. The futility of such a process, when applied to a dozen sentences, if not self-evident, may easily be made plain by applying it to an equal part of any other book, and observing how triumphantly the same thing may be proved in any case whatever. The folly of supposing that the gospel ended with the word *for* (*εφοβοῦντο γάρ*, v. 8), has led to the more complex hypothesis of a genuine conclusion now lost and replaced by that before us, which some ascribe to Mark himself but at a later date. But to most minds this assumption will seem far less easy to believe, than the simple supposition, that the actual conclusion is the one originally written, not only in direct continuation of what goes before, but in execution of a plan which runs through the whole chapter, and has been already stated in the introduction to it.

10. (And) she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

It appears from this verse, that the case of Mary Magdalene was mentioned, only as a second intimation of our Lord's resurrection made to his apostles; for as soon as she had seen and heard him, as related in detail by John, she went and reported to the disciples (John 21, 18), or as it is here expressed, *to those who had been with him*, that he was alive, and what he had said to her. One of the arguments against the genuineness of these verses is the use of this unusual expression, *those who had been with him*, although perfectly appropriate and more expressive than John's term (*disciples*), because suggestive of the fact

that they had formerly been with him, but had since forsaken him, and been far from him, at the very time when their presence and attentions seemed to be most needed. *As they mourned and wept*, literally, *mourning and weeping*, as they might have done for any human friend, whose loss they thought irreparable. This untimely sorrow, at the very time when they should have been rejoicing, shows their faith and hope to have been shamefully defective, as appears still further in the next verse.

11. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

So little prepared were the eleven for the very change which Christ had clearly and repeatedly predicted, that when Mary came to them with this new message, and her own direct testimony to the fact that he was risen and had appeared to her, it had no more effect upon them than the previous report of her companions, who had gone with her to the grave, and after leaving her appear to have been favoured with a distinct sight of the risen Saviour (Matt. 28, 9. 10.) *Believed not* is in Greek still stronger, being one compound verb which might be rendered *disbelieved*, or as it is expressed by Luke (24, 11), it seemed to them as idle talk or nonsense. Such a state of mind may seem almost incredible; but it must be remembered, that all depended on a fixed conviction that the death which he predicted was not to be literally understood, so that when it did take place, they could not instantaneously adjust their views and feelings to this great and sudden change, but simply abandoned all their previous hopes, and sunk into an impotent despairing sorrow.

12. After that, he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

As if to punish them for their defection and stupidity, and perhaps to avoid a similar revulsion in the opposite direction, our Lord did not appear at once to the eleven, but prepared them for the sight by these repeated messages through others. At the same time, he rewarded the affectionate fidelity and stronger faith of his devoted female friends, by making them the channels of the two communications which have been already mentioned. That this privilege, however, was not to be limited to either sex, is now shown by the mention of a third intimation made to *two of them*, not two of the eleven (as appears from Luke 24, 33), but two from among the disciples in the wider sense, to whom the description in the preceding verse (*mourning and weeping*) must be understood as extending. The meagre summary of which some writers here complain is as perfectly in keeping with Mark's purpose in this chapter, as the rich detail of Luke (24, 13-35) with his design. The only discrepancy which has been alleged is Mark's saying that our Lord *appeared to them in another form*, while Luke says that

*their eyes were holden that they should not know him.* The one gives the cause and the other the effect.

13. And they went and told (it) unto the residue ; neither believed they them.

*And they*, the two disciples mentioned in the verse preceding, *going away*, i. e. back to Jerusalem instead of going on to Emmaus (Luke 13, 33), *reported*, carried back word (as in v. 10, and in 6, 30) *to the rest*, to those remaining in the Holy City, but with special reference no doubt to the apostles, as their representatives and leaders, whose incredulity was more unpardonable in itself, and at the same time hurtful to the faith of others. *Neither them (or not even them) did they believe*, an emphatic expression, not implying that these witnesses were more entitled to belief than those before them, but referring simply to the circumstance, that this was the third mediate intimation of the great event, and that even this, although the third, was insufficient to command their full belief ; so that the defect of faith afterwards rebuked in Thomas (John 20, 27. 29) was here displayed, though in a less degree, by the entire apostolic body, and could only be removed by the immediate attestation which is recorded in the next verse.

14. Afterward he appeared unto the eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

*Afterward*, in Greek an adjective in the comparative degree, meaning *later*, *latter*, the neuter form of which, as of many other adjectives, is used as an adverb. Though it does not of itself mean *last*, for which there is a separate superlative form (*τέλεταρον*, not used in the New Testament), it often virtually takes that meaning from the context, namely, when connected with the close of a distinctly marked series or succession of particulars (as in Matt. 21, 37. 22, 27. 26, 60.) This is also the case here, and a point of some importance to the emphasis if not the meaning of the passage, as it marks not a mere chronological succession, but a climax or complete gradation in the disclosure of the Saviour's resurrection to the body of apostles. Having sent them three announcements of the great event (vs. 7. 11. 13), he now, *lastly*, (or *at last*), *appeared to the eleven*, literally, *to them the eleven*, or *the eleven themselves*, i. e. directly, without any further indirect or mediate communication. *Appeared*, in Greek a passive form, *was manifested* (or *disclosed*), suggesting the idea of suddenness, and agreeing with the general fact, revealed in all the gospels, that the Saviour's intercourse with the disciples, in the interval between his resurrection and ascension, was not continued but occasional, and probably at distant intervals (see John 20, 26.) *As they sat at meat*, literally, *to them reclining*, lying down, or lying up (to the table), then the customary attitude at meals (see above, on 2, 15. 14, 3, 18.) *Upbraided*,

(or reproached) their unbelief, or rather *incredulity*, in reference to the great fact of his being risen from the dead, but not a total want of faith in his divine authority or doctrines. *Hardness of heart*, in Greek a single word (*hardheartedness*), denoting not mere callousness or insensibility of the affections, but torpor and inaction of the whole heart, in its widest sense, including intellect as well as feeling (see above, on 2, 6. 8. 3, 5. 4, 15. 6, 52. 7, 16. 19. 21. 8, 17. 10, 5. 11, 23. 12, 30. 33.) The specific ground of this reproach is then assigned, *because they did not believe those having seen* (or *who had seen*) him risen. This is probably the meeting from which Thomas was absent (John 20, 24), *the eleven* having reference to the whole body, as then constituted, not to the number actually present upon any one occasion. It thus appears that Thomas was only guilty of the same incredulity a little longer than the rest, because not so early favoured with the sight of his risen master, and that the reproach addressed to him at the next interview (John 20, 27-29) was equally applicable to the others.

15. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

With the same rapidity and brevity which mark this whole concluding narrative, Mark subjoins immediately to Christ's reproof of the apostles for their unbelief, their great commission, which according to Matthew (28, 16-20) they received in Galilee, a difference pushed by some so far as to allege that Mark represents our Lord's ascension as taking place in the room where the disciples were convened. The truth is that Mark's obvious design in this whole chapter is not to relate details, but simply to enumerate the links required to complete the great chain of events which he has been constructing. The analogy of vs. 9-14 would lead us to expect no greater fulness than we actually find here. The essential fact is, that such a commission was given before our Lord's ascension, not the place or other circumstances, which however are recorded elsewhere. There is also no absurdity in supposing as some eminent interpreters have done, that the commission here recorded is distinct, i. e. uttered at a different time, from that in Matt. 28, 18-20, the one at Jerusalem, the other in Galilee. *Go ye into all the world* is not in the original a direct command, but a participial construction, *going into all the world, preach the gospel*, from which it has sometimes been inferred, that the precept is conditional and means, wherever you do go (for other purposes) there preach the gospel. But the thought supplied, *for other purposes*, is perfectly gratuitous, the true ellipsis being, *for this purpose*, as the participle is dependent on the following verb, and is a past form meaning strictly, *having gone*. The verb itself is one that properly means going to a distance, journeying (as in v. 12.) *Preach the gospel* has become so technical a phrase for official or professional duty, that we often lose sight of its primary and proper sense, *proclaim the good news*, publish the glad tidings of salvation. *To every creature*, or more exactly, *to the whole creation*, which may either be a parallel equivalent to *all the*

*world*, then put for its inhabitants, or may mean the moral and intelligent creation, with specific reference, in this case, to mankind, as the subjects of salvation, and the recipients of the gospel message.

16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

The command to preach the gospel is attended by a solemn sanction, or a promise and a threatening, to show its bearing on the destiny of those who shall embrace it or reject it. *The (one) believing* (it as true, or as from God, and accepting the salvation which it offers) *shall be saved* (delivered from all evil, natural and moral, or from sin as well as suffering), *and the (one) disbelieving* (refusing to believe, the same verb as in v. 11, rejecting it as false, and the Saviour whom it offers) *shall be damned*, a word not too strong to express eternal ruin or perdition, but from its modern use or abuse, awakening different associations from the Greek verb, which means simply, *shall be judged against*, i. e. condemned, implying, although not expressing, the same terrible result.

17. And these signs shall follow them that believe : In my name shall they cast out devils ; they shall speak with new tongues.

(As) *signs* (or proofs of your divine legation) *to those believing* (or converted by your preaching) *these (things) shall follow (it.)* This seems to be a simpler and more natural construction than the one commonly adopted, *these signs shall follow those believing*, i. e. go with them wherever they go. It has been disputed whether this is a promise of miraculous gifts to all believers, and if so how it was fulfilled. As the miracles here mentioned were to serve as signs or proofs, their end would be attained without their being universal, i. e. by their being bestowed upon many, or even on a few, who may possibly be those represented as *believing*, not with a saving faith merely but a special faith of miracles (see above, on 9, 29.) Or the promise may be to believers as a body, though it was to be fulfilled in the experience of only some. And as this whole discourse has reference to the planting and extension of the church in the first ages, the presumption, even from its terms, would be, that these miraculous endowments were a temporary gift, a presumption since confirmed by the experience of the church, although the time cannot be ascertained at which they wholly ceased. *In my name*, bearing it, invoking it, and claiming for me all that it imports, as well as acting for me and by my authority (see above, on 9, 37-39. 41. 11, 9. 10. 13, 6. 13.) *They shall expel demons*, here as elsewhere (see above, on 1, 34. 39. 3, 15. 6, 13) placed in the first rank among the miracles of Christ and his apostles, as extending to another world and to another race of spiritual beings. *New tongues* can only mean languages before unknown to the speakers, in which sense the promise was fulfilled at Pentecost, and on a smaller scale in

other cases still preserved in apostolical history. (See Acts 2, 4. 10, 46. 19, 6, and compare 1 Cor. 13, 1. 8. 14, 5. 6. 18. 22. 23. 39.) This is one of the grounds, on which the sceptical critics would reject this passage as a spurious addition to the gospel, while to others, free from such dogmatic prepossessions, it is rather a confirmation of its authenticity and genuineness.

18. They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

*Take up serpents*, handle venomous and deadly reptiles without injury, a prophecy fulfilled in the experience of Paul (Acts 28, 2), though pronounced by some interpreters entirely irrelevant and of another kind. As the Greek verb often means to *take away* or to *take up* for the purpose of removing (see above, on 2, 12. 21. 4, 15. 25. 6, 8. 29. 43. 8, 8. 11, 23. 13, 15. 16. 15, 21), some explain it here in reference to the expulsion of noxious animals from certain regions, as by St. Paul from Malta, and St. Patrick from Ireland; but these are later legends, and the other miracles here mentioned are instantaneous acts upon particular occasions. *Anything deadly*, mortal, fatal, such as poison. *Shall not*, the strong aorist negation excluding every possible contingency. *Hurt them*, not in the sense of giving pain, but in that of permanently injuring, or more specifically, killing. There is no particular fulfilment of this promise upon record in the sacred history, and the later legend of John's drinking poison may have been directly derived from it. But this is no proof that it was not really fulfilled, as the cases above mentioned were recorded incidentally, for other reasons, not as specimens, much less as an exhaustive list, of such fulfilments. *On the infirm* (strengthless, as in 6, 5. 13), *they shall lay hands*, as the twelve did when first sent out (see above, on 9, 13.) *Recover*, literally, *have (themselves) well* (the converse of the phrase employed in 1, 32. 34. 2, 17. 6, 55), which some strangely understand, not of the sick, but of the healers, who should not only give health to others, but enjoy it unimpaired themselves.

19. So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

*So then*, a resumptive and continuative particle of frequent use in the New Testament, though not in this book, which is far from rendering the genuineness of this passage doubtful, as the writer only introduces the phrase here to wind up his whole narrative. *The Lord*, now absolutely so called, when his sovereignty or lordship had been proved and attested by his resurrection. *After the speaking to them* (just recorded), i. e. the commission to evangelize the world, with the accompanying sanction and assurance of divine assistance. *Was taken up*, and as the Greek verb would at once suggest to every reader, *taken back*,

the preposition used in composition signifying both upward motion and repetition or restoration, as in ἀναβλέπω, to look up and to see again (see above, on 8, 24. 25. 10, 51. 52.) *Into the heaven*, the sky, the visible expanse, referring merely to the apparent direction of the movement; or into that part of the universe where God permanently manifests his presence to the saints and angels (see above, on 1, 10. 6, 41. 7, 34. 11, 25. 12, 25. 13, 32. 14, 62.) *Sat* (or *sat down*) *on the right*, literally, *from the rights*, the same peculiar idiom that occurs above, in 10, 37. 40. 12, 36. 14, 62. 15, 27, and in which the adjective agrees with *parts* or *places*, as it does in English with *side* or *hand*. *The right hand* here denotes the place of honour and of shared or delegated power, and the whole phrase Christ's assumption of the mediatorial dignity, which he had purchased by his sufferings and obedience (see above, on 12, 36.)

20. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with (them), and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

*But they*, the apostles, as the other party in this great transaction, *going out* (or *forth*), not from the room in which the Lord appeared to them, which some assert to be the only meaning that the words will bear, but from Jerusalem, after the effusion of the Holy Spirit and the dispersion of the mother church, as recorded in the first part of the Acts of the Apostles. *Preached* (announced, proclaimed the new religion) *everywhere*, in all directions, and perhaps more strictly still, in all parts of the world, as we know that the original diffusion of the gospel was extremely rapid and simultaneous, which accounts for the absence of detailed information, while the general result is among the most notorious facts of history. *The Lord*, the risen and ascended Saviour, mentioned just before by the same title, *working with (them)*, co-operating, an expression also employed by Paul (2 Cor. 6, 1) to denote the gracious use of human instrumental agency in executing the divine plans. The particular co-operation here intended is that promised in v. 17, of which this clause describes the general fulfilment. *Confirming*, fortifying, strengthening, corroborating, rendering effective, by miraculous credentials. *The word*, i. e. the gospel which they preached as a divine revelation. *With* (literally, through, by means of) *the following* (or *accompanying*) *signs*, not signs in general, but those specifically promised in the previous context (see above, on vs. 17. 18.) It would not be easy to find two short sentences containing more than these concluding verses, one of which describes the whole process of our Saviour's exaltation, and the other the whole missionary work of the apostles, as its necessary fruit, and therefore a conclusive proof of its reality. If the original conclusion of this book is lost, its place has been wonderfully well supplied.







